



Implementing ERA-NET COFUND: proposal preparation until contract preparation

The view of BiodivERsA

1. Specificities of BiodivERsA
2. BiodivERsA3 proposal preparation
3. Financial and administrative aspects
4. Participant portal: from proposal submission to project implementation
5. Advantages and drawbacks of the COFUND tool

Claire Blery – Executive Manager of the BiodivERsA Secretariat



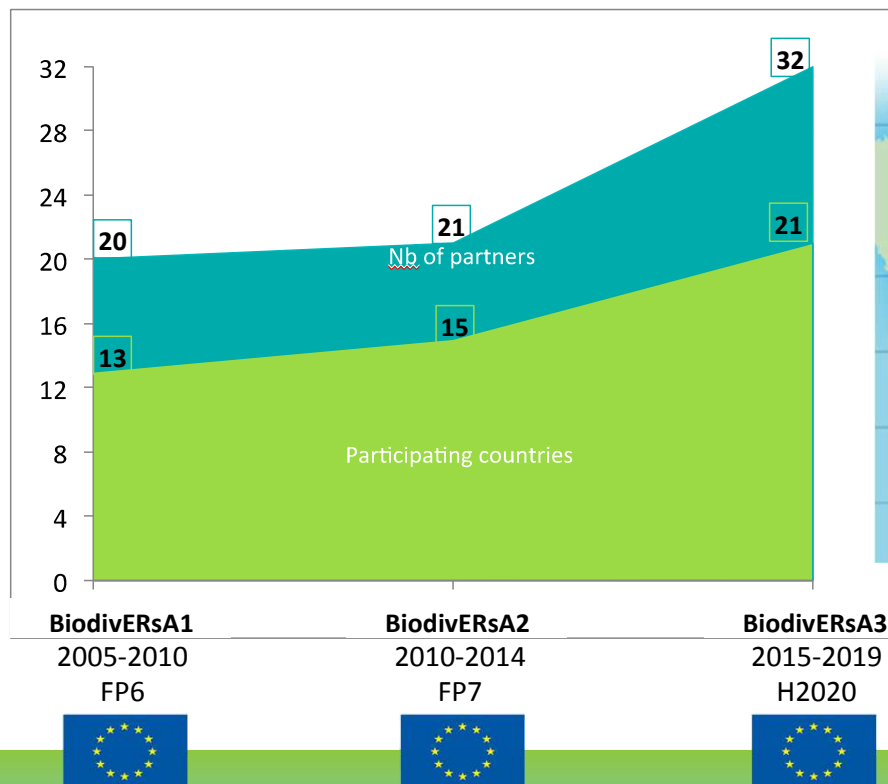
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Overview of the BiodivERsA network

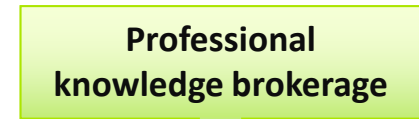
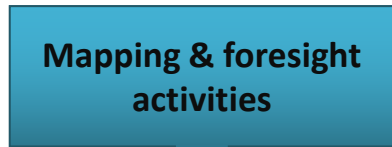
- The European network of organisations programming and funding research on biodiversity and ESS in Europe
- 32 partners** from 21 European countries, including overseas



BiodivERsA major activities



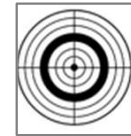
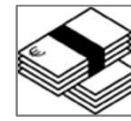
Coordinate strategic programming and funding of research across Europe



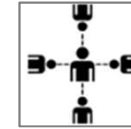
The BiodivERsA database
> 12,000 projects



Covering the whole biodiversity, ESS and NBS domain



6 calls since 2008
for 134 M€



Dissemination of project's outputs
-
Already 6 policy briefs published



BiodivERsA major activities



Coordinate strategic programming and funding of research across Europe



Mapping & foresight activities

Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda

Annual calls

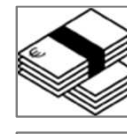
Professional knowledge brokerage



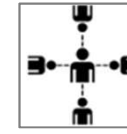
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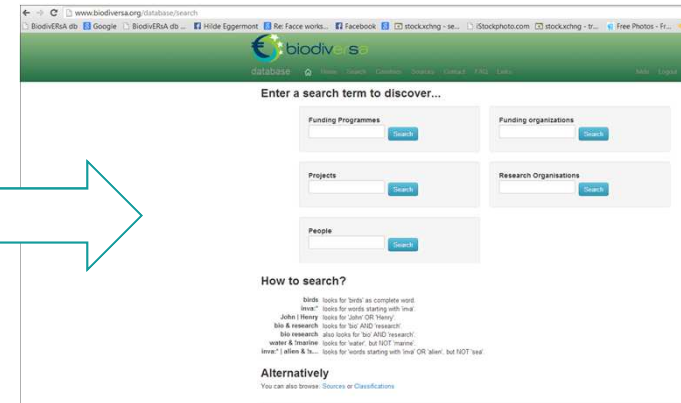


Mapping & foresight activities

•The BiodivERsA database

<http://www.biodiversa.org/database>

comprehensive, transnational view on research programmes and projects on biodiversity



600

annual calls for research proposals

6500

funded projects

120

organisations funding biodiversity research

•Analyses of levels of research funding and temporal trends in the type of biodiversity research funded in Europe



+ •Mapping research infrastructures for biodiversity over Europe

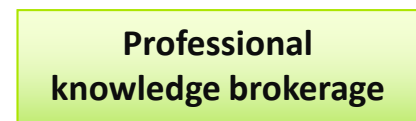
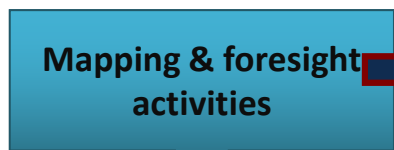
+ •Analysis of gaps and priorities & foresights views for European research on biodiversity and ESS

Identification of knowledge gaps, e.g. on functioning of green & blue infrastructures

BiodivERsA major activities



Coordinate strategic programming and funding of research across Europe



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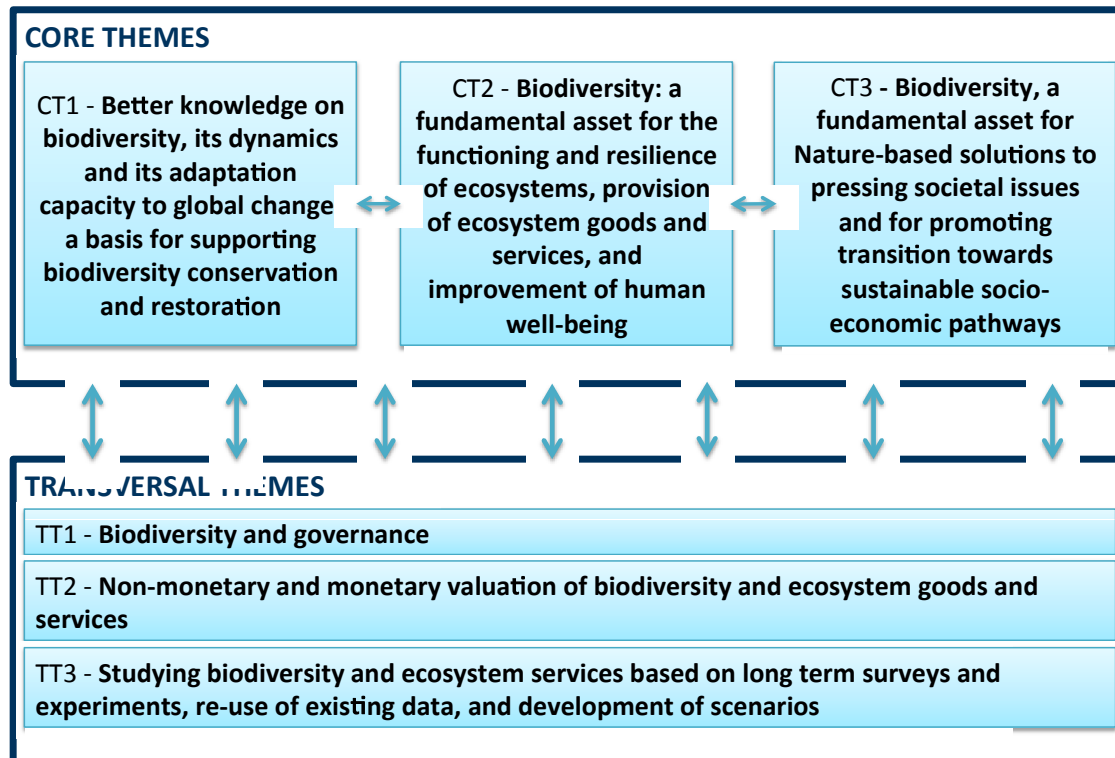
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The BiodivERsA SRIA

1st BiodivERsA STRATEGIC RESEARCH AND INNOVATION AGENDA (2016-2020)

- Defines the major challenges to be tackled by BiodivERsA
- Frames the broad type of research supported



SRIA adopted in June 2016

On-going open consultation

Final version of the SRIA by the end of 2017

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

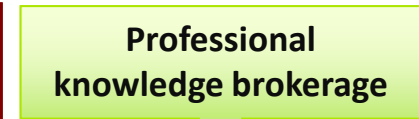
under preparation

- More precise document defining activities, topics to be addressed in future calls and timing

BiodivERsA major activities



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Dissemination of project's outputs
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Research funding

6 calls already launched since 2008

- 
-  Biodiversity: linking scientific advancements to policy and practice
 -  Biodiversity and ecosystem services, and their valuation
 -  Biodiversity dynamics: developing scenarios, identifying tipping points, and improving resilience
 -  Invasive species and biological invasions
 -   Promoting synergies and reducing trade-offs between food supply, biodiversity and ecosystem services




... Including one jointly launched with the EC

-  Understanding and managing soil and sediments biodiversity dynamics to improve ecosystem functioning and delivery of services
-  Understanding and managing biodiversity dynamics in land-, river- and sea-scape (habitats connectivity, green and blue infrastructure, naturing cities)

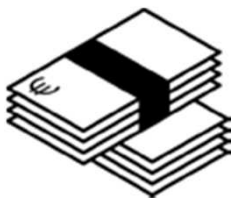


BiodivERsA will continue to launch annual joint calls

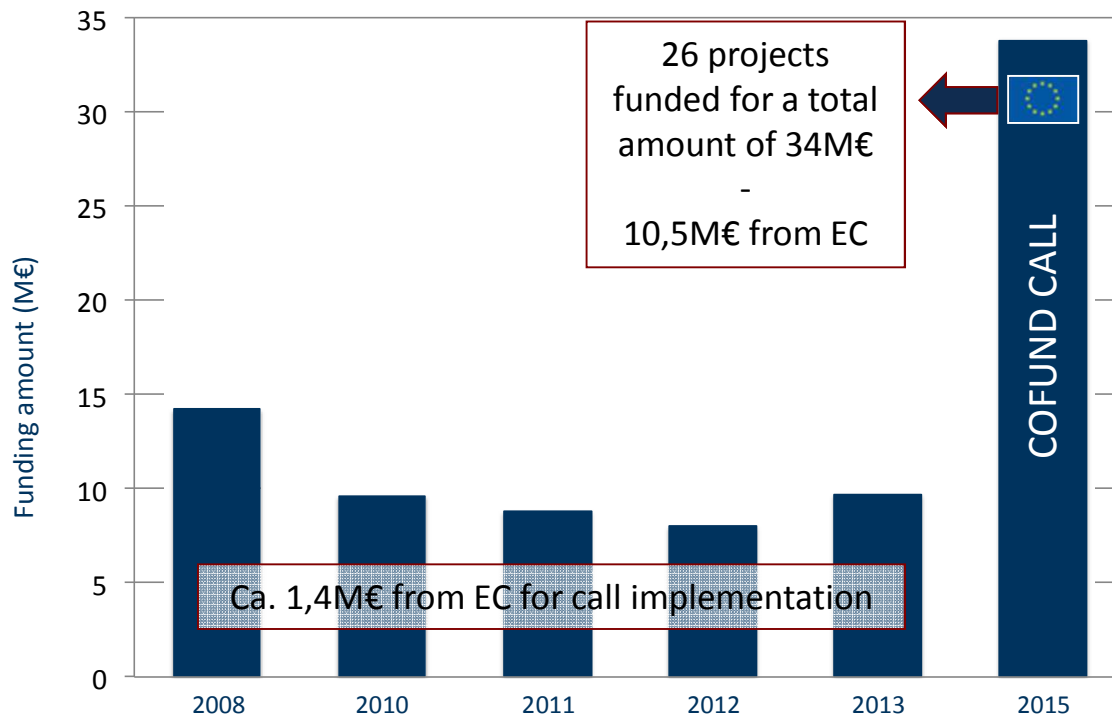
- Next one in 2017
- **Possible additional CO-FUND calls**, co-financed by the European Commission 

Research funding

• Funding amounts of BiodivERsA calls



134 Million € in total
80 Million € in cash



20

European countries involved in BiodivERsA calls

73

projects funded

457

teams funded

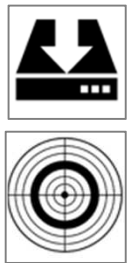
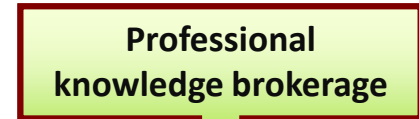
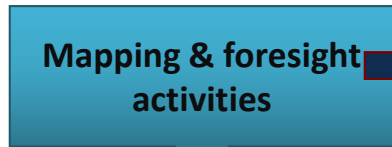
18.8 %

of applicants were successful

BiodivERsA major activities



Coordinate strategic programming and funding of research across Europe



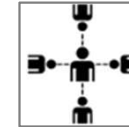
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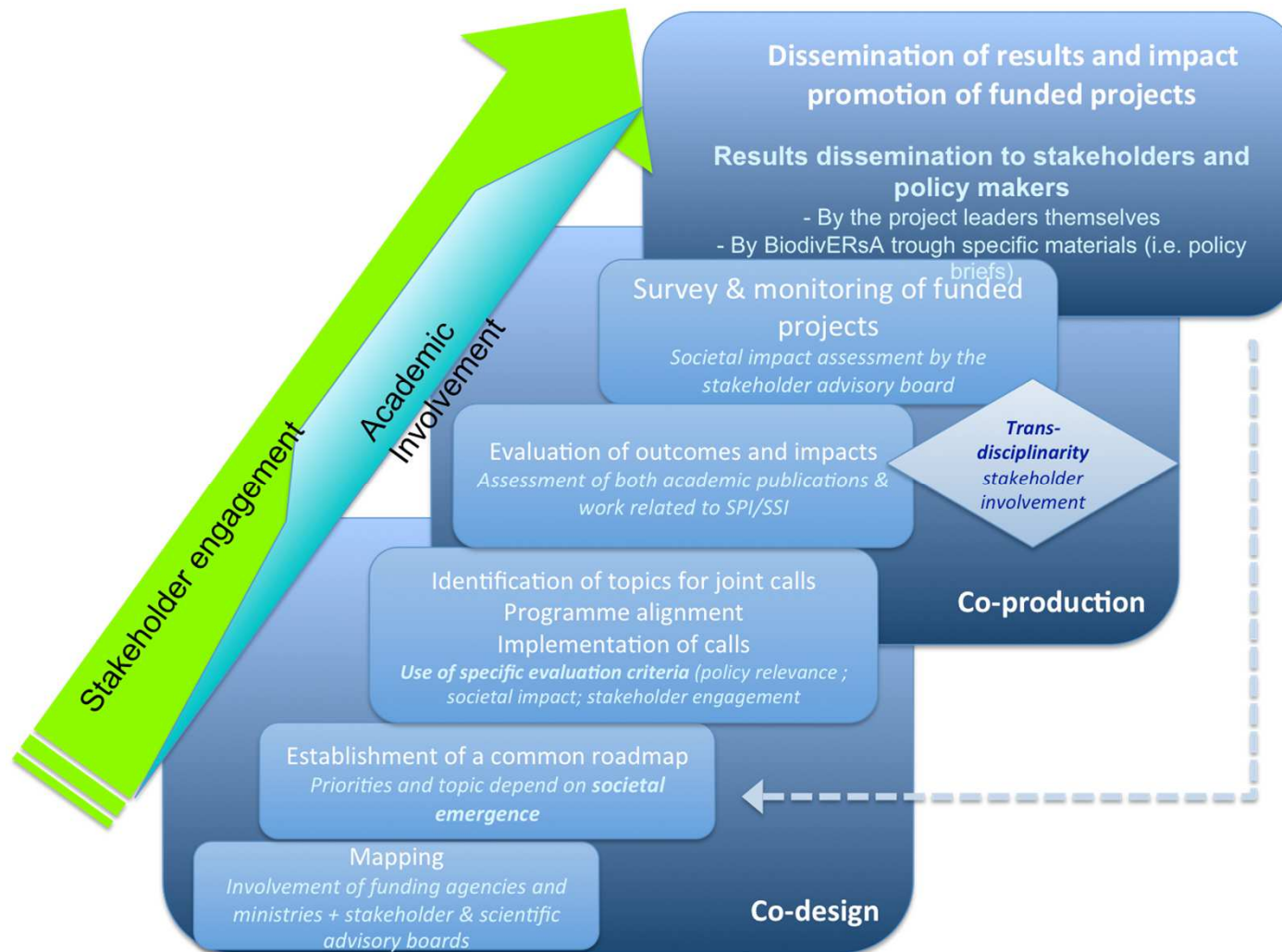
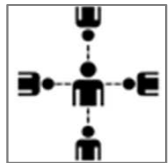
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Dissemination of project's outputs
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Stakeholder engagement throughout the whole research process



Stakeholder engagement,
Knowledge brokerage
& dissemination of projects' outputs

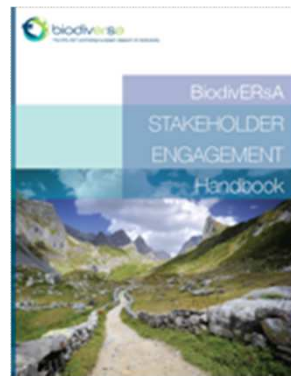
- Promotion of science-society interfacing



STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Analysis of good practices for stakeholder engagement in research projects

The BiodivERsA Stakeholder engagement handbook



KNOWLEDGE BROKERAGE

Production & dissemination of policy briefs

Based on results of research projects funded by BiodivERsA





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The consortium

Status of the partners: all **RESEARCH FUNDERS**, either owning or managing research programmes

At the proposal preparation and submission stage: **31 partners from 18 European countries** → Including 10 new partners

Since the beginning of BiodivERsA3: + 3 partners

➤ 2 new full partners (FI, SK)

➤ 1 associate partner (LV)



An **open network** ready to welcome new members approaching us

“À LA CARTE APPROACH”: Possibility to **choose the activities** in which partners want to contribute (i.e. calls, tasks, events, etc.)

PROPOSAL
PREPARATION:
CONTENT

1. The
consortium

2. 1st plan for a
COFUND Call

3. Additional
activities

FINANCIAL &
ADMINISTRATIVE
ASPECTS

USE OF THE
PARTICIPANT
PORTAL

ADVANTAGES
&
DRAWBACKS

1st plan for a COFUND Call

- In BiodivERsA2: **common strategic rolling agenda**
Based on research strategies and priorities set by the partners

Priorities identified:

- Biodiversity and ecosystem services, and their valuation
- Biodiversity dynamics: developing scenarios, identifying tipping points, and improving resilience
- Invasive species and biological invasions, with a particular focus on alien invasive species
- Promoting synergies and reducing trade-offs between food supply, biodiversity and ecosystem services
- From soil biodiversity to soil functioning and services in a global change context
- Improvement of habitats connectivity, functioning green infrastructure, diversifying landscapes
- Biodiversity and Health

2010-2011 Call

2011-2012 Call

2012-2013 Call

2013-2014 Call

Topics for the 2015 COFUND

PROPOSAL PREPARATION: CONTENT

1. The consortium

2. 1st plan for a COFUND Call

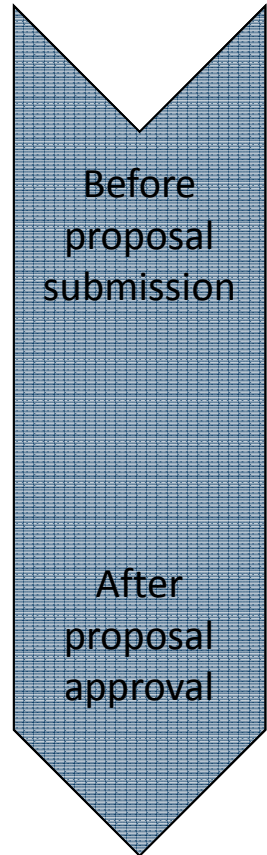
3. Additional activities

FINANCIAL & ADMINISTRATIVE ASPECTS

USE OF THE PARTICIPANT PORTAL

ADVANTAGES & DRAWBACKS

1st plan for a COFUND Call



Based on the rolling agenda > agreement between partners on the **topic and sub-topics** to be addressed for the COFUND Call



Development of the **call text and call MoU** at the beginning of BiodivERsA3

PROPOSAL PREPARATION: CONTENT

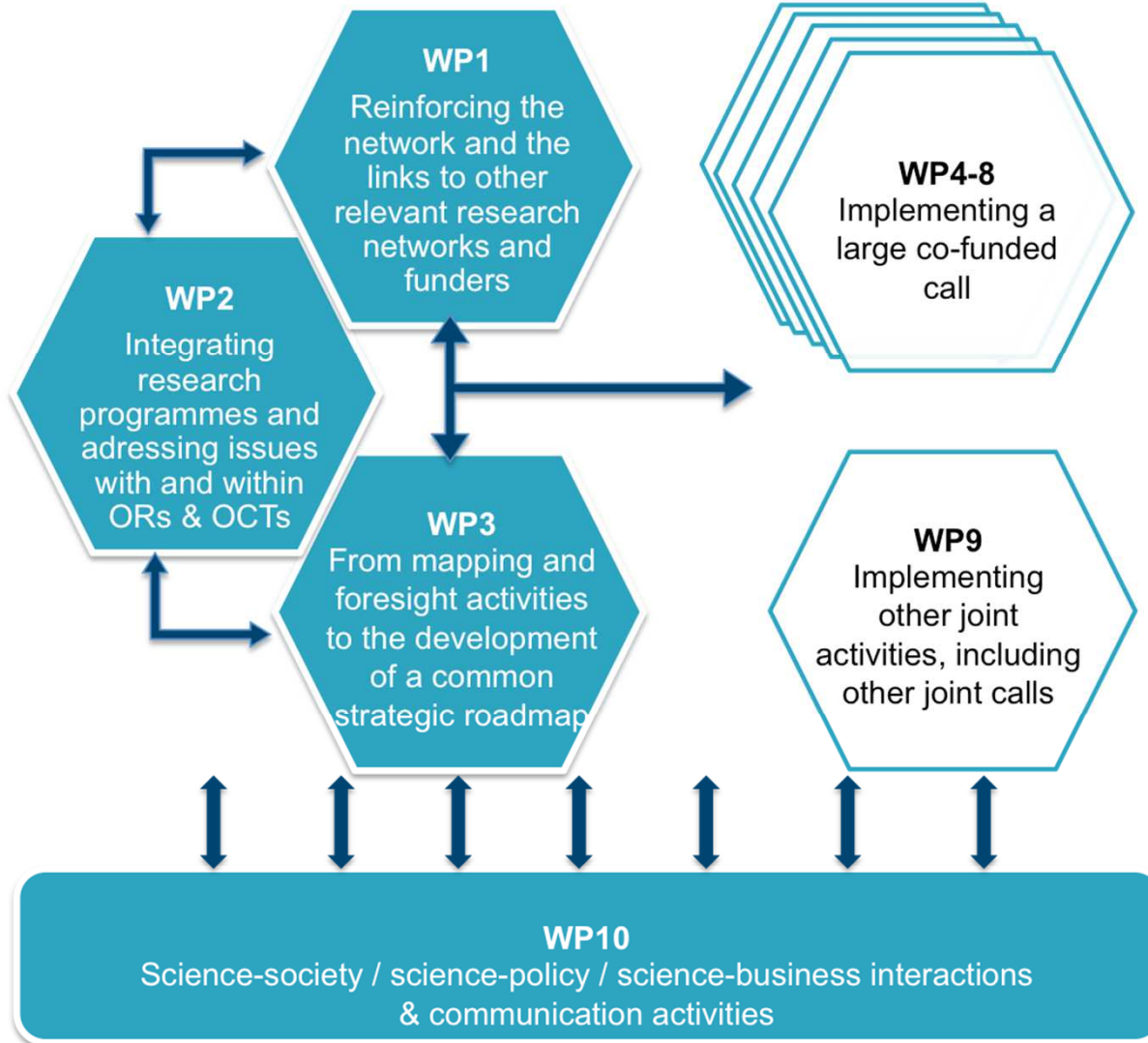
1. The consortium
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FINANCIAL & ADMINISTRATIVE ASPECTS

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Additional activities



WP11: coordination and management & Prepare a sustained cooperation in the future

PROPOSAL PREPARATION: CONTENT

1. The consortium

2. 1st plan for a COFUND Call

3. **Additional activities**

FINANCIAL & ADMINISTRATIVE ASPECTS

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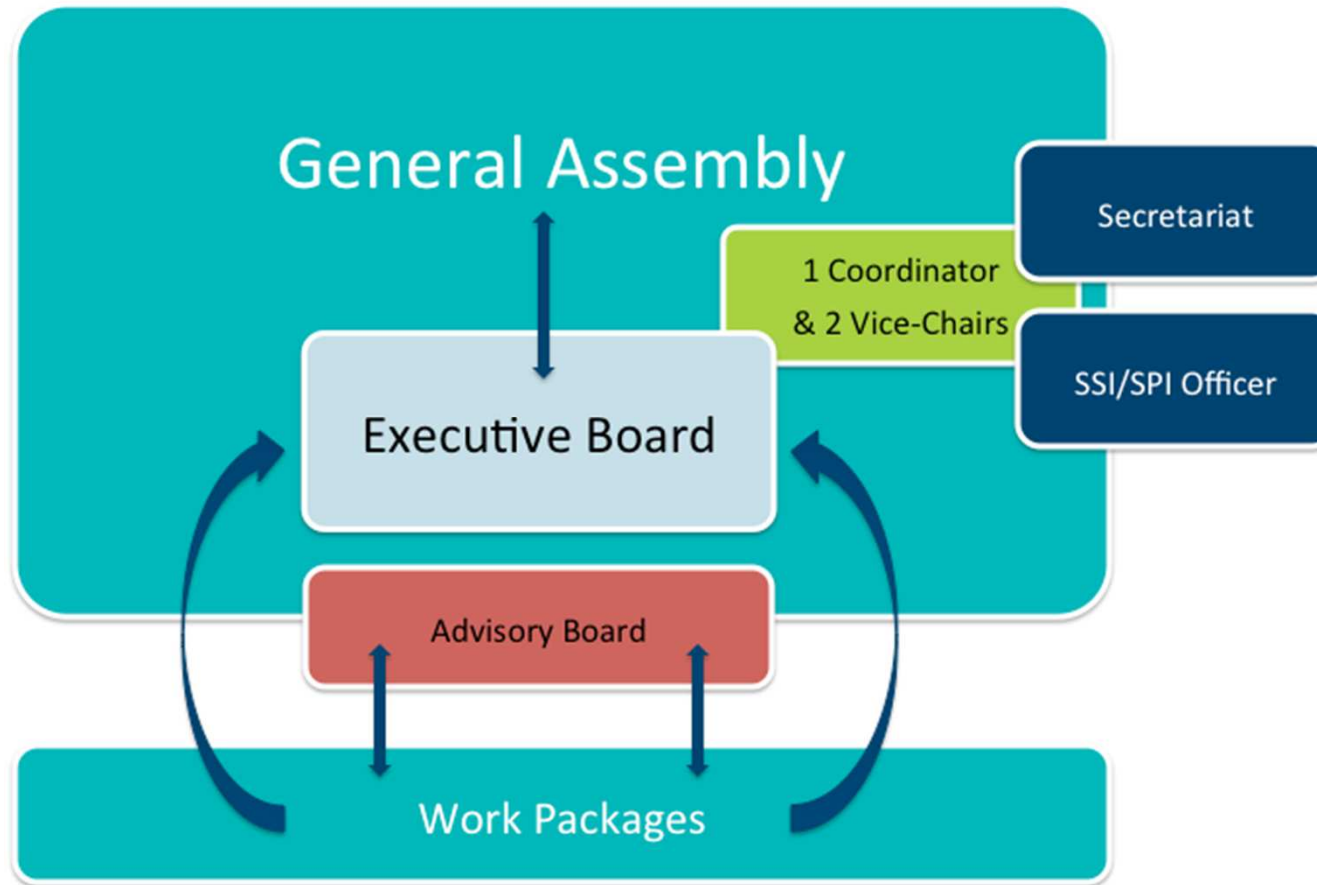
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Governance



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1. Governance

2. Financial
aspects

3. Contractual
aspects

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➔ Role and missions of each body defined in **Terms of References** agreed by the partners

Financial aspects

In the grant with the European Commission

Contributions to fund research projects

- Financial support to research teams implementing selected projects within the COFUND
- In accordance with national funding rules

Use of EC contribution for the call: mix mode approach

- 70-90% used on a pro-rata basis
- 10-30% used as a common pot

Coordination Unit Costs (CUC)

EC rules:

- For additional activities than the COFUND Call
- Capped to 20% of the total EC contribution

In BiodivERsA:

- CUC cover part of the costs of additional activities
- CUC not centralised: each partner receive the number of CUC declared

Not enough to fund all additional activities planned in BiodivERsA3

Agreement among partners

Network Fund for call implementation & other activities

Principle:

Use of additional national contributions, above the amount needed to fund research projects

In BiodivERsA3, used to cover:

- Costs of additional activities not covered by CUC
- COFUND Call management costs

PROPOSAL PREPARATION: CONTENT

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1. Governance

2. Financial aspects

3. Contractual aspects

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Contractual aspects

GRANT AGREEMENT

Between the European Commission and the partners

Signed at the beginning of the project by all partners and the European Commission

- Information on the different **activities, deliverables** and **milestones**
- Definition of **reporting period** and global payment schedule
- **no detail on the budget** beyond research funding and CUCs

CONSORTIUM AGREEMENT

Between the partners

Contract signed at the start of the project

- Mainly on **governance issues**
- Detailed **budget** of the activities and **financial provisions**

CALL MoU

Between **partners participating to the Call**

Signed after the set up of the CSC

Details related to the **rules of the call** (implementation, evaluation process, funding)

PROPOSAL PREPARATION: CONTENT

FINANCIAL & ADMINISTRATIVE ASPECTS

1. Governance

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Proposal preparation

Electronic submission of the proposal

The coordinator submits the proposal to the European Commission

- Partners added through their PIC number
- Annex 1 part A generated with the information entered online (WP description, milestones & deliverables, implementation risks, partners contribution to the different WP)
- Annex 1 part B – template of the proposals –uploaded
- Annex 2 budget generated automatically with the information entered online



Make sure that partners' organisation already have a **PIC number**

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2. Grant
preparation

3. During the
project's life

4. Reporting

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Grant preparation

1. **Invitation to prepare GA** together with an **Evaluation Summary report**
2. In agreement with the PO, implement online the modifications requested in the Evaluation Summary report
3. **All signatures online:** Declaration of Honour and accession forms

➔ Normally 3 months to complete all these steps

For the signature of the GA:

- 1) Coordinator signs
- 2) EC signs
➔ The GA enters into force
- 3) all partners sign the accession form (timeframe: 1 month from the date of signature by EC)

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Grant preparation

Some recommendations for the Grant Agreement preparation

The partners have to complete different actions online to sign the Grant agreement:

- Appoint a **LEAR**, who has to appoint a Financial (FSIGN) and Legal Signatory (LSIGN)
- Appoint a **LSIGN** and **FSIGN** for the project
- Signature of the **declaration of honour** by the PLSIGN
- & Signature of the accession form to the **Grant Agreement**

➔ **Ask partners** – even before the results of the evaluation process – **to check if a LEAR, FSIGN and LSIGN are already appointed** on SYGMA for their organisation !

It will ease and accelerate the signature process.

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During the project's life

Amendment to the Grant Agreement

- Requested by the European Commission; or
- Requested by the consortium

Easy to initiate amendment to the GA on the participant portal:

- The coordinator enters a justification for the amendment, modify online the data and upload supporting documents (if needed)
- Submission of the amendment by the Coordinator
- The EC approves or rejects online the amendment

Submission of deliverables:

- All deliverables have to be submitted online through the continuous reporting tool
- Information on the milestones can also be added online (date of delivery mainly)

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Reporting

All steps of the reporting online

- Technical part of the Periodic Report
 - Summary for publication online
 - Core report template uploaded online
 - Status of milestones and deliverables generated automatically
- Request for pre-financing filled in online
- Signature of Statement on the availability of funds (1st reporting) online

!! All partners have to do it, even the ones no participating to the call or not funding any projects !!

!! For all actions on the participant portal, all partners automatically receive a message from the European Commission, which might be confusing !!

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Advantages and drawbacks of the tool

Advantages

- Once everything is set up, the **online system** and online signature system is convenient
- **Easy reporting process**, notably thanks to the online reporting tool
- Strong **financial leverage** allowed by the COFUND Action tool
 - Possibility to successfully launch ambitious calls
- **Attractive tool** for some countries
 - Can ease the mobilization of partners

Drawbacks

- **Complex financial model** for the consortium of national funders. The approach implies to **survey the budget through two different views**, which is hard to understand for partners
- **Budget uncertainties**
 - Until the results of the COFUND Call (>1 year)
 - To a lesser extent, until the end of the funded projects
- **Financial rules not always clear & answers from EC service not always applying to the COFUND**

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Thank you for your attention!

[Find out more about BiodivERsA](#)

www.biodiversa.org

 [@BiodivERsA3](https://twitter.com/BiodivERsA3)

Xavier Le Roux, BiodivERsA Coordinator & CEO

xavierleroux@hotmail.fr

Claire Blery, Executive manager of the BiodivERsA Secretariat

claire.blery@fondationbiodiversite.fr

Frédéric Lemaître, SSI/SPI Officer

frederic.lemaitre@fondationbiodiversite.fr



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