



## HELIOS FOUNDATION

### Call for Proposals "The Decarbonisation Challenge"

#### - Context

In recent years there has been a growing awareness of the climate change emergency and an increasing commitment to act quickly and impactfully to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, mitigate climate change and invest in measures to adapt to unavoidable changes. The European Green Deal has determined a European ambition for 2030-2040-2050, as well as targets for the Member States.

The current climate crisis is the result of excessive GHG emissions. This climate crisis is also unfolding against a more general backdrop of environmental crisis (biodiversity, pollution, overexploitation of natural resources, etc.). Decarbonisation is seen as one of the central solutions to the climate issue, and it needs to be contextualised within a more systemic socio-ecological framework.

To meet its global and European commitments, and to fully seize the opportunities offered by the transition to a sustainable society and economy, Belgium needs to bring about a transformation towards a low-carbon economy and a fair ecological transition. This transition will demand far-reaching transformations in the way we produce, consume and operate.

#### - Purpose

This call for proposals aims to **support and finance** ambitious, realistic and impactful initiatives that target systemic changes and offer concrete solutions to promote the decarbonisation of production, consumption or functioning/organisation in Belgium.

#### - For whom?

**Applicants** can be private organisations (start-ups, scale-ups, VSEs, SMEs, large companies, etc.), public institutions (academic and research institutions, etc.), semi-public or civil society institutions (non-profit associations, private foundations, NGOs, etc.) or a consortium of different organisations.

#### - What kind of projects?

This call for projects is **open to any initiative** that results in transformation in resource extraction and management, production, transport, consumption, recycling and waste management, or the organisation of society, leading to a significant reduction in GHG emissions. The call is **also open to any applied research project** that is close to implementation.

The call is open both to solutions for direct emissions reduction and to applied research for innovations designed to facilitate and accelerate decarbonisation.

#### - What financial support is available?

The total support budget requested must be **between 2 million (minimum) and 3 million (maximum) euros**. This funding will be for a maximum of 5 years, with an evaluation after 2 years to validate the continuation of funding. In the case of private organisations such as start-ups, scale-ups, VSEs, etc., this financial support excludes any equity investment by the Helios Foundation.

Project proposals will be assessed in **two phases: (i)** on the basis of a three pages letter of intent based on the attached outline, to select only the most promising proposals that meet the criteria below, and **(ii)** only for projects selected in the first phase, a 15 pages detailed proposal to allow for an assessment of the proposal's quality and its potential contribution to decarbonisation by experts in the field.

- **What are the selection criteria?**

Proposals must meet ALL of the following criteria:

- i. **Territory**: The GHG reduction takes place **in Belgium**.
- ii. **Relevance and Impact**: Leads to a significant and demonstrable reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.
- iii. **Impact measurement**: **A reduction that is verifiable** and measurable, with quantified emission reduction targets and estimated abatement costs over the short, medium and long term.
- iv. **Additionality**: **Additional impact** compared with "business as usual" in the sector or activity concerned, contributing to Belgium's European *Fit for 55* and *net zero by 2050* pathways and to the legal and judicial requirements in Belgium.
- v. **Direct reduction**: Represents a **direct reduction** in emissions (or has high potential to lead to a direct reduction in the short or medium term, in the case of applied research projects) and therefore excludes activities whose *sole* aim is carbon capture (this criterion therefore does not exclude regenerative agriculture projects, for example).
- vi. **Permanence**: Has a **permanent** effect on decarbonisation.
- vii. **"Do no harm"**: **No significant negative impact** on biodiversity, the water cycle, soil, land, health, etc
- viii. **"Leakage"**: **No leakage/displacement of emissions** to another sector or location.
- ix. **Financial feasibility/business model**: High potential to be **financially viable** in the long term, either intrinsically or through additional funding from public or private sources.
- x. **Public subsidies**: Not directly and/or fully eligible for **existing public subsidies** (e.g. Belgian Federal Energy Transition Fund, etc.).

In addition, the **following characteristics will be viewed as positive** in the selection process:

1. **Holistic and systemic approach**: Adopts a **systemic approach** to solutions and impacts.
2. **Co-benefits**: Generates environmental and/or social **co-benefits**.
3. **Potential for replication**: The project has potential for **replication** on a larger scale and/or in other contexts.
4. **Collaboration and partnership**: Brings together different players **to work together** on a shared challenge, and demonstrates the ability to collaborate with these partners.

The submission and evaluation deadlines for both phases have been set so that selected projects should receive their funding before the end of 2025.

- **What is the project selection process?**

- **"Letter of intent" - pre-selection:**  
The letters of intent will be examined by the Helios Foundation's "Decarbonisation" **Advisory Board** and, where appropriate, by specific experts linked to specific areas of decarbonisation.
- **"Detailed proposals" - selection:** Detailed proposals (for the selected letters of intent only) will be examined by **the Advisory Board**, on the basis of assessments by experts in the areas covered by each project.
- **"Approved projects":**

The selected detailed proposals will be submitted by the "Decarbonisation" Advisory Board to the **Helios Foundation Board of Directors** for approval.

- **What is the timing?**
  - **Wednesday 23/04:** Launch of call for projects to collect “letters of intent”;
  - **Monday 16/06 - noon:** Deadline for receipt of “letters of intent”;
  - **Wednesday 23/07:** Announcement of shortlisted projects and launch of the second phase of the call for “detailed proposals”;
  - **Wednesday 10/09 - midnight:** Deadline for reception of “detailed proposals”;
  - **Monday 8/12:** Announcement of the selected projects.
  
- **Contact:**
  - **For technical information:** KBF Call Centre - 02 500 4 555
  - **For specific information:**
    - Project Coordinator: Aurélie Dupont - 02/883 07 88 - [dupont.a@mandate.kbs-frb.be](mailto:dupont.a@mandate.kbs-frb.be)
    - Project Knowledge Manager: An Van Campenhout - 02/549 02 61 - [vancampenhout.a@kbs-frb.be](mailto:vancampenhout.a@kbs-frb.be)

**Presentation of the Helios Foundation  
and the partnership with the King Baudouin Foundation.**

The Helios Foundation’s mission is to tackle two of the most pressing challenges facing Belgium: the transition to a carbon-neutral economy and improving mental well-being in the workplace. Driven by the desire to make a measurable impact through innovation and integrity, it invests in pioneering solutions and forges strategic alliances with research institutions, businesses and civil society. The Helios Foundation works tirelessly to build a sustainable future and better mental health for Belgium.

As part of this commitment, the Helios Foundation has entrusted the coordination of a call for proposals to the King Baudouin Foundation. The Helios Foundation retains full autonomy in the selection of projects, the management and support of the projects selected, and their ongoing evaluation.

This collaboration is part of a wider partnership between the Helios Foundation and the King Baudouin Foundation, which has the role of an incubator to develop the philanthropic work of the Helios Foundation.

## **PHASE 1 of the call for proposals: Outline for letters of intent**

**Maximum 2,000 words and three pages**

### **1. Title of the project**

- Project name
- Supporting organisation(s) and contact person  
(*about 30 words*)

### **2. Problem identified**

- What is the problem you are targeting?
- Which emissions are you seeking to reduce?
- Why is this a critical issue in Belgium?  
(*about 200 words*)

### **3. Solution/approach proposed**

- Concise description of the solution or technology developed.
- Type of technology or approach:
  - Direct reduction of emissions: How does this technology or approach reduce emissions per unit of activity?
  - And/or how does this solution speed up decarbonisation?
  - What is the systemic impact of the proposed solution?(*about 200 words*)

### **4. Traction and market potential**

- What is the current status of the project (prototype, pilot, implementation, etc.)?
- Preliminary results.  
(*about 150 words*)

### **5. Competition and differentiation**

- Who are your main competitors and/or what alternatives exist?
- What makes your solution unique, superior or complementary?  
(*about 100 words*)

### **6. Methodology for estimating carbon reductions**

- Estimated **verifiable, additional, permanent** reductions in Mton CO<sub>2</sub>e/year in the short, medium and long term.
- Estimated abatement costs/revenue (€/Mton CO<sub>2</sub>e reduced or avoided) in the short, medium and long term.
- Approach to impact measurement: definition of the baseline, data sources and assumptions, precautions against overestimation.  
(*about 250 words*)

### **7. Business model and long-term vision**

- Position of the project in the value chain in the relevant sector.
- Strategy for scaling up. How will the project be financially sound and sustainable?
- What are the five-year strategic objectives?  
(*about 150 words*)

### **8. Team**

- Presentation of key members and their relevant expertise, and any partnership.  
(*about 100 words*)

### **9. Budget summary table:**

- Amount requested per year (between €2,000,000 and €3,000,000 over a maximum of 5 years).
- Provisional allocation (R&D, pilots, recruitment, equipment, etc.).

- Other potential funding sources (public or private), including current funding applications (public or private).

*(1 Excel page, attached)*

#### 10. Systemic effects

- **Constraints:** What barriers or limitations impact the development or implementation of the solution?
- **Catalysts:** What factors or advances could speed up its implementation or increase its impact?
- **Co-benefits:** What additional environmental or social benefits are expected (biodiversity, health, employment, etc.)?
- **Risks:** Are there any potential negative social, environmental or economic impacts, critical weaknesses or risks of carbon leakage? If so, how are these taken into account?
- **Links with other initiatives:** How does the project fit in with or complement existing efforts (local, national, international)?

*(approx. 200 words) or, preferably, diagrams or sketches.*

#### **PHASE 2 of the project proposals: Format for detailed proposals**

- The full proposals will follow the **same outline as the letters of intent**, but providing much **greater detail**.
- The maximum length is 15 pages and 10,000 words + appendices (bibliography, CVs, etc.)
- The proposals will include an estimate of the development of “abatement costs”, a Gantt chart, milestones and the budget associated with the Gantt chart.
- Illustrative diagrams are welcome.
- The proposal must include a pitch consisting of no more than 15 PowerPoint slides.
- Include the names of two potential evaluators who have no connection with your organisation and the project
- The proposal will include the following documents:
  - **Documents presenting your organisation:** annual report, brochure or other presentation document.
  - **Legal documents:** your organisation's articles of association or by-laws, including dissolution clauses.
  - **Financial documents:** latest financial accounts.
  - **Governance documents:** constitution of the Board of Directors.