

EUROPEAN FOREST INSTITUTE NETWORK FUND

Green Book of Biocities

Guidelines for applicants

Closing date for proposals: 31 May 2020, 17:00 CET

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Corrections

- 18.5.2020. Chapter 3.2 Eligibility criteria. Old: The Coordinator shall be an EFI Associate Member. Updated: The Coordinator shall be an EFI Associate of Affiliate Member.

1 GENERAL INFORMATION

This document provides practical guidelines for the submission, evaluation, and selection of applications for the grant call Green Book of Biocities.

Funding from the EFI Network Fund is open to all EFI Associate and Affiliate member organizations, with a valid membership status¹. Participants from other organizations can participate in activities funded by the EFI Network Fund.

Under the Green Book of Biocities call, the EFI Network Fund will provide funding up to a maximum of 200,000 euros. The grantee has to provide co-financing.

2 GRANT CALL

2.1 Background

For the first time in human history, across the world we have more people living in cities than in rural areas. Cities already account for more than 80% of global economic output, consume close to two-thirds of the world's energy, and account for more than 70% of global greenhouse gas emissions. On the global level, every day around 200,000 people move to cities, which explains why more than two thirds of the global population will live in urban areas by 2050. Migration from rural to urban areas and the urbanization of lifestyles beyond city borders are happening at record speed, and on a scale the world has never experienced before.

Cities present some of our greatest challenges but have also been the crucible of 'solutions' throughout human history, being the place where innovation, development and new ways of thinking emerge, and where far-reaching political decisions are taken. Global change to our climate means that it is urgent to transform our existing, non-sustainable fossil-fuel based economy into a circular bioeconomy where prosperity takes place within the renewable boundaries of our planet. To do that requires rethinking our cities, based on a new and synergistic relationship between economy and ecology as well as integrating rural and urban areas more holistically. Ultimately, this requires us to move towards sustainable bio-based cities - Biocities.

In this context, forests, forestry and (forest)-nature-based solutions have a fundamental role to play. The use of trees and forests in urban areas supports human health and wellbeing and makes

¹ EFI membership fee is paid for the year in which the proposal is submitted (by the deadline of the call) and for the years the study is receiving the grant from the EFI Network Fund (by the deadline indicated in the membership fee invoice).

cities more tolerable and even joyful places to live in. Trees help to reduce the energy needs for cooling and heating in buildings, as well as reducing the urban heat island effect. Trees and forests within and surrounding city boundaries are further important places for biodiversity and (forest) nature-based recreation. Forests also provide wood and non-wood forest products, and wood-based solutions are key to replace non-renewable materials like plastics, steel or concrete. For example, using wood in construction is one of the most effective ways we have to reduce the urban carbon footprint.

In this context, EFI aims to launch a Biocities Facility to better connect science-based knowledge to policy and practice, and to unlock the potential of forest-based solutions in rethinking and creating sustainable, healthy and resilient cities, while leading the decarbonization of our society.

2.2 Objective and main outcomes of the study

To develop the concept of Biocities as well as shape the future work of the EFI Facility, EFI will fund a study, via a grant from the EFI Network Fund, to mobilize EFI member organizations with relevant expertise to collectively reflect, contextualize and synthesize existing scientific research and knowledge from different disciplines and sectors relevant to the development of the concept of Biocities. This study will address knowledge gaps and identify specific topics and activities that could be addressed by the new Facility. The study should have a strong focus on the transformational potential of forests, ranging from the urban to the rural, and how forests trees and wood can enable us to rethink cities holistically to ensure their sustainability and resilience. It should be rooted in a truly interdisciplinary approach. The study should consider branches of research and practice, such as:

- Natural sciences, biodiversity and urban ecology
- Forest sciences, especially the challenges of growing and managing trees in urban and urban-influenced situations
- Social sciences especially the needs of growing cities, socio-demographics, biocultural diversity, community engagement and liveability
- Circular bioeconomy, especially a switch to greater use of timber to replace products with high embedded energy, and the use of recycled wood products
- Public health, especially air and water quality, access to green space and green infrastructure for active lifestyles.

The study should result in a manuscript for the first ever “**Green Book**” of Biocities, and a manuscript for a **Research agenda** to be used by the new EFI Biocities Facility.

The added value of the **Green Book** should lie in the contextualization and synthesis of the available scientific knowledge from different disciplines – it should fundamentally be interdisciplinary. It

should also assess the overall state of knowledge, policy and sectoral challenges that need to be addressed within the Biocities concept.

The Agenda will identify major knowledge and capacity building gaps and the priority research areas and topics in relation to the development and implementation of the Biocities concept in Europe and globally.

More specifically, the study should tackle at least the items listed here below. The applicant can propose additional relevant items:

- 1) Develop a conceptual framework for Biocities that is distinctive from other sustainability concepts for cities (Green Cities, Transition Towns, Healthy New Towns, Energy Neutral Cities) including key components such as: circular bioeconomy thinking, green infrastructure, public health and wellbeing, urban forestry, energy efficiency, carbon footprint, wood as material and resource, biodiversity and biocultural diversity, urban design, community engagement and urban governance. Discuss the above in the context of evidence-based scientific arguments from relevant disciplines.
- 2) Map how named (bio)actions in cities would help to decarbonize cities, enhance biodiversity and deliver other named benefits, including an assessment of synergies and trade-offs, and how they can be mitigated. Provide examples of the potential impact of developing Biocities within inter-governmental policy and investment frameworks.
- 3) Provide examples of/from cities globally that can illustrate components and good practices that could be considered within the concept of Biocities.
- 4) Identify major knowledge and education gaps and the priority research areas and topics in relation to the development and implementation of the Biocities concept in Europe and globally.

The methodological approach shall be adequate to meet the objectives of the study. Importantly, interactive engagement with key stakeholders should be included and specified in the proposal.

EFI and the Study Coordinator will discuss the final format of the Green Book and the Research Agenda. One possibility is to use EFI publication series. Reference can be made to the European Forest Institute's "What Science Can Tell Us" (WSCTU) publication for inspiration. More information about the final format can be found at: https://www.efi.int/publications-bank?combine=what+science+can+tell+us&field_efi_tags_target_id=All&field_efi_language_target_id=All&=Apply

The technical editing, layout, language checking, printing and distribution of the Green Book of Biocities publication and the Biocities Research Agenda will be done by EFI or in agreement with the Coordinator.

2.3 Timeline

The proposal shall contain a provisional timeline for the study, adhering to the following milestones:

- Start of the study work: July 2020
- Presentation of the scope of the study: EFI Annual Conference, 13 October 2020
- Submission of draft final manuscripts: July 2021
- Review process: July-September 2021
- Revising and finalization of the final manuscripts: September-December 2021
- Submission of final manuscripts: 31 December 2021

2.4 Team

The study is to be conducted by an interdisciplinary team. An application shall be submitted by at least three EFI Associate and Affiliate Member organizations, with one of them being the Coordinator. Other organizations are also welcome if duly justified to cover the disciplinary expertise required.

3 PREPARING AND SUBMITTING A PROPOSAL

3.1 Enquiries

All enquiries concerning the call shall be addressed by email to Ms. Katriina Pajari (katriina.pajari(at)efi.int) with subject line: Green Book of Biocities.

3.2 Eligibility criteria

Applications shall, to be eligible for funding, comply with the following eligibility criteria:

- **Applicant:** the proposal shall include at least three EFI member organizations (Associate or Affiliate Members²). Other organizations are also welcome if duly justified to cover the disciplinary expertise required.

The Coordinator shall be an EFI Associate or Affiliate Member.

² EFI membership fee for 2020 is paid for the year in which the proposal is submitted (by the deadline of the call).

- **Budget:** the requested grant will not exceed 200,000€. The proposed budget for the study may however be greater than 200,000 €.
- **Deadline:** all proposals shall be submitted by 31 May 2020 by 17.00 CET
- **How to submit:** the application should be submitted using the web form at (<https://www.efi.int/membership/benefits/networkfund/greenbook>)
- **Proposal format:** proposals shall respect the instructions, format and page limits described in the proposal template.
- **Language:** proposals shall be written in English.

3.3 Proposal

All applications shall apply the following structure:

- General Information
- List of study partners
- Technical proposal
- Budget
- Descriptions of study partners

To be eligible, the proposal shall follow the technical instructions given in the proposal template available at <https://www.efi.int/membership/benefits/networkfund/greenbook>. Please note that the style of the provided proposal template shall not be modified.

General information

The following information about the proposal shall be provided:

- study title and acronym
- study summary
- name and contact details for coordinating organisation

List of study partners

A list with all study partners including the following information:

- Participant No.
- Participant organization name
- Acronym
- Country

Technical proposal

The technical proposal shall contain only the following elements:

i) Introduction

A description making reference to the call text and the previous experience of the persons conducting the study – demonstrating understanding of contextualization and synthesis of scientific knowledge from different disciplines in relation to sustainable bio-based cities, distinctive from other sustainability concepts for cities.

ii) Methodology

A description of the methodological approach for the study, addressing:

- interdisciplinary team work
- interactive engagement with key stakeholders
- a provisional timeline

iii) Green Book of Biocities

An outline of the Green Book of Biocities:

- overall structure (chapters)
- a short description of the content of each proposed chapter
- an indicative distribution of tasks between lead scientist and the additional scientists

iv) Research Agenda

A description of the process that will lead to the formulation of the Research Agenda

Budget

The proposal shall include a budget table, where the total costs and EFI Network Fund contribution are shown per study partner.

Study partners

A description of the study partners and key staff involved, not exceeding one page per partner.

4 PROPOSAL EVALUATION, SELECTION AND APPROVAL

4.1 PROPOSAL EVALUATION

Each proposal is evaluated according to the eligibility and quality evaluation criteria.

Each proposal is checked against the eligibility criteria specified in Section 3.2. The eligibility check is performed by EFI Secretariat. Only eligible proposals are submitted for quality evaluation.

The quality evaluation of the technical proposal is considering the following evaluation criteria.

Evaluation criteria	Max points
Team members' relevant collective qualifications in terms of scientific credibility, number of disciplines covered and other relevant experience in urban-related projects, policy support or planning, as well as geographical and gender balance of the team	25
Understanding of contextualization and synthesis of scientific knowledge from different disciplines in relation to sustainable bio-based cities, distinctive from other sustainability concepts for cities	10
Methodological approach	20
Outline of the Green Book of Biocities manuscript	25
Description of the process that will lead to the formulation of the Research Agenda	20

In addition to the quality evaluation, feasibility to undertake the study with the proposed budget will be evaluated.

The evaluation is performed by an evaluation panel, composed of the members of the EFI Scientific Advisory Board (SAB), heads of EFI programmes and other relevant experts if needed³.

The quality evaluation is conducted in three steps:

Step 1: The members of the evaluation panel evaluate the proposals individually and submit the evaluation scores to the EFI Secretariat.

³ To avoid potential conflicts of interest, the evaluation panel will only consist of evaluators not participating, or being related to any of the submitted proposals.

Step 2: The evaluation committee members meet to resolve potential differences in opinions, by agreeing on a common score within the range of scores awarded by the individual evaluators. The evaluators shall strive for consistency of scoring across the proposals within the evaluation panel.

Step 3: Finally, the evaluation panel ranks all the proposals and prepares a report for the Board of EFI.

4.2 PROPOSAL SELECTION AND DECISION

Based on the report submitted by the evaluation panel (ranking of the proposals), the Board of EFI will consider and decide on the application to be funded.