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Framework ICP Travel Grant & Bench Fee FYP2



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1. Conceptual framework

1.1. Introduction

The new Five-Year Programme of VLIRUOS (FYP2) started on 1 September 2022 and will run until 31 August 2027. Within the ICP-Connect projects the Travel Grant and Bench Fee instruments can be implemented. This document contains the formal framework for the ICP Travel Grant and ICP Bench Fee instruments for the period 2022 – 2027 and describes the minimum conditions, agreements and expectations with regard to these instruments.

1.2. FYP2 ambitions

VLIRUOS outlined new ambitions for its Five-Year Programme 2022-2027 where the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development serves as the main reference point. VLIRUOS is committed to purposefully mainstream the 3 SDG principles of 'Leave No One Behind (LNOB)', 'Interconnectedness' and 'Multi-stakeholder partnerships', throughout its ambitions, policies, programmes, portfolio, partnerships and scholarships. The focus of Agenda 2030 on meaningful impact through multi-stakeholder partnerships resonates with the ambition of our FYP2, "Connect4Change". It is our goal to focus on cooperation among and beyond academic actors, on collective learning and mutual inspiration and on societal impact (valorisation) (Connect, Learn, Inspire).

These policy ambitions have been translated into the project selection criteria and descriptors for all our programmes. VLIRUOS wants new projects to use former and/or other relevant projects as a stepping stone, and to stimulate **interinstitutional cooperation**. It is an added value in the competitive selection of projects when collaborations are sought beyond the academic sector and when different Flemish or partner Higher Education & Science Institutions (HE&SIs) are involved in a project proposal, be it universities, universities of applied sciences and arts, or both.

1.3. The objectives of ICP Connect projects

At the level of VLIRUOS, ICP Connect projects are expected to contribute to more sustainable and equitable development by fostering:

- Application of solutions and evidence-based policies
- A global community of skilled individuals who act as global citizens in relevant sectors
- Knowledge-driven global partnerships.

1.3.1. International thematic networks

The specific objective is that through educational networks (ICP Connect) and scholarships HE&SIs aim to systematically integrate global perspectives hereby creating a supportive, inclusive and networked learning environment in which individual scholarship students, professionals and academics acquire transversal competences and state-of-the-art knowledge on sustainable development enabling them to become experts and critical global citizens motivated to act as change agents in their network.

ICP Connect projects aim to more systematically integrate global perspectives and strengthen global south and network dimensions into existing study programmes. This implies a strategy that aims to spur the internationalization and networking of the study programme by:

- adapting content, didactics and approaches;
- foreseeing modalities to enhance the quality of the learning process and engage participation of international students;
- linking it with the local context of one or more partner countries by means of student and/or professor mobility and/or partial delocalization of the programme to (one or more) partner institutions;

1. staying connected with graduates of the study programme, and by connecting alumni with each other and with students and (network) partners, at providing learning opportunities and support mechanisms to alumni.

ICP Connect Projects make a fundamental contribution to Agenda 2030, with a focus on the 3 SDG principles. Part of an ICP Connect project is the focus on the content, didactics, lecturers and curriculum components of the educational programme. Interaction between diverse student profiles is stimulated. Closely linked to the educational programme is the focus on the 'students', more specifically ensuring quality participation and personal and professional development of international students and especially VLIRUOS scholarship holders. As part of ICP Connect projects, measures are also taken to stay connected with graduates of the study programme, at connecting alumni with each other and with students and (network) partners, at providing learning opportunities and create support mechanisms for alumni. Within ICP Connect projects, reciprocal partnerships and networks with relevant educational or research institutions, as well as other organisations (e.g. NGOs, private sector) or institutes (e.g. government bodies) are built or strengthened, allowing for co-teaching, co-creation of courses and curricula components, co-organization of (online) courses, co-hosting of fieldwork and thesis research, co-planning of major curricular and extra-curricular activities, shared responsibilities in double degrees, mutual involvement in boards, etc.

1.3.2. Global citizenship

The education activities of ICP Connect projects, supported by research and knowledge-driven partnerships, are also an obvious pathway for promoting global citizenship among students. Through research and service delivery to society, global citizenship can be promoted in the broader academic community (e.g. staff, alumni, networks). The ICP Connect projects can offer students and alumni the opportunity to acquire global citizenship competences through these instruments and help them contribute to a global community of critical, solidary global citizens.

The ICP Travel Grant and Bench Fee instruments can contribute to both purposes by facilitating the creation of broad international thematic networks and by fostering the acquisition and application in society of global citizenship competences by students and alumni.

1.4. General objectives of the ICP Travel Grant and Bench Fee instruments

An **ICP Travel Grant** is a financial compensation for students enrolled in an ICP programme, alumni or students of partner institutions to make a project-related trip. The trip can be part of the curriculum, such as an internship, fieldwork or a thesis, for which a student can acquire a number of credits. The ICP Travel Grant can also be used to participate in summer schools, group travels or other activities organized by the ICP Connect project. The relevance of the activity for which the travel grant is granted overall and for the study progress in particular is assessed by the study programme organisers.

An **ICP Bench Fee** is a payment to the host unit (institution or department), never to a person. It is a financial compensation to support the mobility to and stay of a person at the host unit. It is a contribution to the cost of providing workspaces and laboratories, using study materials, research equipment, computing hardware and software, and the support and supervision of students enrolled in an ICP programme or students of partner institutions that make a project-related trip. These partner institutions need to be part of the ICP Connect network.

Both instruments contribute to the development of ICP students: students are given the opportunity to gain relevant field experience and are also made aware of concrete sustainable development issues in a globalised world through these travels and exchanges and the exposure that this linked to them. This experience should be capitalised by these students by taking on a role as critical world citizens and as agents of change. Since this goes broader than the VLIRUOS scholarship holders, a critical mass emerges that not only has an affinity with the objectives of Agenda 2030, but also act as global citizens of solidarity and advocate global citizenship with respect to other students, teachers, friends, family, etc. The effect that is generated on a broader group, both within and outside the higher education sector, is an important multiplier effect (impact) of the VLIRUOS ICP Connect programme as a whole and of every specific ICP Connect project in particular.

In addition, there is a second objective of the ICP Connect projects that relates to multi-stakeholder partnerships. Beneficiaries of ICP travel grants get embedded in a coordinated network of students, alumni, staff, partner institutions (HE&SIs) and possible other partners (e.g. NGOs, private sectors) through the content of the study programme and in particular the travel and exchange that goes along with it, allowing them to build long-term collaborations and contribute to positive change. These interactions between all the different actors allows them to contribute to the sustainable development objectives of the involved organisations.

2. Operational framework

2.1. Budget

An **ICP Travel Grant** is a financial compensation for students enrolled in an ICP Connect study programme, alumni or students of partner institutions to make a project-related trip. The available budget for student travel grants is part of the ICP Connect project budget. The ICP Connect Projects themselves determine how much budget they wish to reserve for ICP Travel Grants. An ICP Travel Grant can amount to a **maximum of € 1,750 per stay per person**.

An **ICP Bench Fee** is a payment to the host unit (institution or department), never to a person. It is a financial compensation to support the mobility to and stay of a person at the host unit of a student enrolled in an ICP Connect study programme or students of partner institutions at the host unit. It is a contribution to the cost of providing workspaces and laboratories, using study materials, research equipment, computing hardware and software, and the support and supervision at the partner institution related to activities organised by the ICP Connect project. These partner institutions need to be part of the ICP Connect network. An ICP Bench Fee can amount to a **maximum of € 1,500 per stay per person**.

2.2. Eligibility criteria

This chapter lists the eligibility criteria that have to be met in order to be included in the selection procedure and thus to be eligible for funding.

There are 4 criteria: profile of the applicant, country of destination, duration of travel, and purpose of travel. These eligibility criteria include the minimum requirements that the applicant and the mobility must meet.

In addition, institutions and/or study programmes can set additional conditions, in line with their respective policy.

2.2.1. Profile of the applicant

To be eligible for an **ICP Travel Grant**, the following conditions must be met:

- Students enrolled in an ICP Connect study program. Students that are not nationals of the 29 scholarship countries (+Belgium) but who are enrolled in an ICP Connect study program can also receive limited financial support. Of all students involved in the activity, those with a different nationality than the 29 scholarship countries or Belgium should be a minority
- Alumni of an ICP Connect study programme (no nationality criteria)
- Students of partner institutions (no nationality criteria). These partner institutions need to be part of the ICP connect network.

Beneficiaries cannot receive a Global Minds Travel Grant (REI). These funds are not complementary.

To be eligible for an ICP Bench Fee the following conditions must be met:

- The fee is linked to students enrolled in an ICP Connect study program or students of partner institutions to support their mobility to the partner institution and their stay.
- The payment of the fee goes to the host unit (institution or department) of an partner institution that is part of the ICP connect network.

2.2.2. Country of destination

ICP Travel Grants are funds for a project-related trip to a VLIRUOS scholarship country. The country list for scholarships also applies for ICP Travel Grants. Visits, (prospection) travels, internships, etc. by students, scholars and alumni can also be financed as part of an ICP Connect Project if the destination is not one of these countries under the condition that the activities must fit within the finality of the ICP Connect project.

ICP Bench Fees can only be paid at partner institutions which are part of the ICP Connect network. If the partner institution is not located in one of the VLIRUOS scholarship countries, the activities must fit within the finality of the ICP Connect project.

An overview of the VLIRUOS scholarship countries can be found on the VLIRUOS website.

2.2.3. Duration of the stay

No minimum or maximum amount of time for the mobility is foreseen but the principle of reasonableness needs to be wielded.

2.2.4. Purpose of travel

An **ICP Travel Grant** is a financial compensation to make an ICP project-related trip. The trip can be part of the curriculum, such as an internship, fieldwork or a thesis, for which a student can acquire a number of credits. The ICP Travel Grant can also be used to participate in summer schools, group travels or other activities organised by the ICP Connect project. The relevance of the activity for which the travel grant is granted overall and for the study progress in particular is assessed by the study programme organisers.

An **ICP Bench Fee** is a payment to the host unit (institution or department), never to a person. It is a financial compensation to support the mobility of a person to and stay at the host unit. It is a contribution to the cost of providing workspaces and laboratories, using study materials, research equipment, computing hardware and software, and the support and supervision at the partner institution related to activities organized by the ICP Connect project. These partner institutions need to be part of the ICP Connect network.

The ICP Connect project draws the student's attention to the obligation to take out supplementary travel assistance insurance and informs them about the possibilities. When signing the declaration of honour (see Annex), the student confirms that they have taken out insurance.

2.3. Selection

Each ICP Connect project is responsible for the selection of recipients of an ICP Travel Grant or ICP Bench Fee. The flexibility of the grant amount allows the projects to operationalize a LNOB policy that is encouraged by VLIR- UOS and to concentrate on the activities that contribute most to the ICP Connect project's objectives.

2.4. Formal commitments

ICP Travel Grant : Prior to departure, the grantee signs a declaration of honour in a format developed by VLIRUOS agreeing with a number of predetermined conditions set by VLIRUOS, which is equivalent to signing an agreement (see Annex A). These predetermined conditions are described in the current document "Framework ICP Travel Grant & Bench Fee FYP2".

ICP Bench Fee: Prior to departure, an MoU is signed with the relevant partner institution in a format developed by VLIRUOS (see Annex B). If an existing agreement is already in place that follows the same outline, no new document needs to be signed. The MoU includes the predetermined conditions are described in the current document "Framework ICP Travel Grant & Bench Fee FYP2".

2.5. Payment

Since the ICP Travel Grant and ICP Bench Fee are integral parts of the ICP Connect project budget, the transfer of the amount (no higher than € 1,750 and € 1,500 respectively) to the individual/institution is part of the ICP Connect project implementation. How and when the payment is made, depends entirely on the ICP Connect project.

2.6. Reporting to VLIRUOS

The set-up and implementation of the selection system for ICP travel grants and bench fees is the responsibility of the individual ICP Connect projects.

The ICP Connect projects should collect and process all relevant data relating to the selection system, applicants and grantees as part of their annual ICP Connect project reporting. The ICP Connect projects are asked to include the ICP Travel Grant and ICP Bench Fees policies used by the project in the first Annual Progress Report.

2.7. Financial accountability

The general rules set out in Financial Framework are applicable.

Additionally a document or declaration signed by the institution and the grantee describing the predetermined conditions of the **ICP Travel Grant** set out by VLIRUOS in the "Framework ICP Travel Grant & Bench Fee FYP2" needs to be available. In case of the **ICP Bench Fee** an MoU needs to be signed with the relevant partner institution (if none is in place). This MoU describes the predetermined conditions of the ICP Bench Fee set out by VLIRUOS in the "Framework ICP Travel Grant & Bench Fee FYP2"

The accountability to DGD is the formal framework.

3. Annexes

Annex A – Declaration of honour ICP Travel Grant

Annex B – Memorandum of Understanding ICP Bench Fee

Abbreviations

DGD	Directorate General for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid
FYP	Five Year Programme
HE&SI	Higher Education and Science Institution
ICP	International Course Programme
ICP Connect	International (Study) Connect Project
LNOB	Leaving no one behind
VLIRUOS	VLIR-Universitaire Ontwikkelingssamenwerking (VLIR-University Cooperation for Development)