

## National Research Program for Environmental and Occupational Health

### 2013 Call for Research Proposals “Radiofrequencies : exposure characterisation and study of electrohypersensitivity”

**Deadline for submission of the letters of intent: August 30, 2013**  
**Deadline for submission of the complete proposals: October 4, 2013**

**Note that in case of difference between English and French version, the latter is the correct one**

## I. OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM

The French National Research Program for Environmental and Occupational Health (PNR EST) is funded by Anses with funds from the ministries of environment and labour, and associates several co-funders: ADEME, ITMO Cancer of AVIESAN alliance under the “Cancer Plan 2009-2013”, ONEMA under the “Ecophyto” Plan, the Ministry in charge of agriculture under the “Ecoantibio 2017” Plan. In addition, funding from a tax on radio transmitters is to be added to other funds for projects on health effects of radio frequencies. This latter source of funding is used for the present call.

The French National Research Program for Environmental and Occupational Health (PNR EST) promotes the production of knowledge in support to public policies for environmental and occupational health and safety and disseminates this knowledge to stakeholders. This gives the program a leading role to promote interactions within the scientific community, which helps Anses to mobilise researchers for the collective expert assessment of health risks.

## II. OVERVIEW OF THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS

This call for research proposals (CRP) aims to produce knowledge which may be used to develop public risk management policies in the area of “radiofrequencies and health”. Furthermore, it aims to significantly increase the size of the research community involved in the radiofrequency research area.

**Research proposals are selected based on their originality and scientific quality and should strengthen knowledge in particular on critical points related to the assessment or management of health risks.**

### III. SCOPE OF THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS

The call for proposals deals with the assessment and analysis of environmental risks related to radiofrequencies, to human health, in the general population and in the workplace. The themes covered by the 2013 CRP are listed in Annex 1 as a list of research items that have been identified as high-priority for potential users of this research.

### IV. PROPOSAL CHARACTERISTICS

Proposals will be written as research projects with a well identified target.

These research projects may be developed by a single team or involve several partner teams. Each partner team has a well identified leader. The project will appear as a single proposal under the coordination of a single scientific project manager (the leader of one of the involved teams).

Funding shall be requested to undertake the study or project. The applicable rules are listed in annex 2.

Two types of research proposals are expected in 2013:

#### **Feasibility studies:**

Their purpose is to explore an innovative approach whose feasibility has not been established.

- Funding shall not exceed € 50,000
- The maximum implementation period shall be 2 years.

#### **Complete projects:**

These are research projects which rely on an established methodological approach so that there is a good level of assurance that the objectives will be achieved.

- Financial support will lie between € 40,000 and € 200,000. It can exceed € 200,000 if this is required by the project's nature and provided the request is strongly defended. This should be justified for instance for projects on radiofrequencies involving large consortia. In any cases the budget request will be lower than a ceiling of € 400 000).
- The implementation period shall be 3 years maximum for a complete project.

### V. SELECTION PROCEDURE

The selection procedure relies on two committees:

- The research program's scientific committee (RPSC). It is made up of renowned researchers in the fields of environmental health and occupational health. The RPSC will assess the scientific value of the submitted proposals and of the progress reports from the funded projects.
- The program's steering committee (SC). It is made up of sponsors and ministries involved in the scope covered by the call for proposals. The SC chooses the projects to be funded from the proposals selected by the RPSC.

The selection process will be divided into two stages as defined below:

- an initial selection on the basis of letters of intent,
- a second selection based on complete applications, subsequent to shortlisted letters of intent.

The submission timetable and procedures are set forth in Section IX

### **Stage 1: Letter of intent shortlisting**

Letters of intent that do not meet the eligibility criteria defined in Section VI will not be evaluated.

The evaluation of the letters of intent will be made by the RPSC. This committee will take into account the selection criteria defined in Section VII. This is why special attention should be granted to the quality of the letters of intent, which need to contain enough information, in a small amount of space, to allow the RPSC to evaluate the relevance of the proposal.

Only proposals whose letters of intent are shortlisted will be eligible to submit a complete application.

### **Stage 2: Complete application selection**

To be eligible, complete proposals must meet all of the eligibility criteria described in Section VI. Applications that do not meet all of these criteria will not be evaluated.

The proposals will then go through the following selection processes:

1. Collective scientific assessment of the proposals by the RPSC : Each proposal will be evaluated by two independent experts according to the criteria described in Section VII, and their conclusions submitted to the RPSC.
2. Collective opinion of the SC, on projects selected by the RPSC, according to the criteria described in Section VII. The SC can also give advice on adequation of requested funds with regards to planned tasks. Exceptionally it may recommend project modifications or even projects gathering to incorporate several approaches or disciplines likely to improve the project's overall quality and relevance in relation to the programme's objectives.
3. The final decision to support a proposal falls upon the funding entities. The list of selected proposals and the sponsor identity is published on Anses website.

## VI. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

A proposal's eligibility will be examined at both selection stages, first through a letter of intent and second through a complete application, on the basis of the information that is available at each stage. Research proposals must meet the same conditions at both stages:

### **Proposal characteristics**

1. The projects must lie within the research domain covered by the call for proposal as defined in section III. The research items addressed (among the one in annex I) by the project must be indicated.
2. The proposals' characteristics must be compatible with those listed in Section IV.

### **Conditions regarding the participating teams**

1. This call for proposals is open to all research teams, irrespective of the institution they belong to (higher education and research establishments, research organisations, other public establishments with a research mission, technical centres and private establishments with R&D activity, etc.). Due to the particularities of the research domain addressed by the present call, partners other than research teams are welcome insofar as their added value in the project has clearly been established.
2. The proposal must be coordinated by one academic research team (higher education and research establishments, research organisations, other public establishments with a research mission).
3. The call for research proposals is open to foreign teams. To facilitate foreign partnerships, the CRP's text is available in English on the Anses website (same address as the French version).
  - Any proposal submitted by a French team can include a partnership with one or more foreign teams.
  - Any proposal submitted by any foreign team – or a team that belongs to an international organisation (even if it is based in France) – **must include** a French partner.
4. A RPSC member cannot be a leader in a project submitted under this call for proposals (scientific coordinator of a project or leader of one of the partner team).

### **Administrative conditions**

1. Letters of intent and complete applications **must** be submitted in accordance with the procedures listed in Section IX. They must contain all of the requested information and be submitted by the deadline.
2. The proposal shall be authorised by the institutional leader of the coordinating research team and signed by the manager of each partner team.

## VII. CRITERIA FOR THE SCIENTIFIC ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSALS

A proposal will be examined at both selection stages, through a letter of intent and then a complete application, on the basis of the information that is available at each stage. The selection criteria are as follows:

### **Letter of intent stage**

Letters of intent are examined based on Criteria 1 to 4 on the list under the 'Complete application stage' heading.

### **Complete application stage**

Proposals are assessed based on the following criteria:

- 1) The subject's scientific significance for the research area in environmental health and/or occupational health,
- 2) Scientific novelty : proposals shall be justified with regard to research undertaken at French, European and international levels,
- 3) Connection to research items. The considerations mentioned in the "Research items" Annex I will play an important role in the prioritisation of proposals, particularly by the steering committee,
- 4) Methodological quality and scientific feasibility. This encompasses any measures taken to ensure confidence in the quality of results<sup>1</sup>,
- 5) Organisational and partnership excellence (the proposal must include a provisional project timetable),
- 6) Consortium excellence. Scientific output of the requesting parties,
- 7) Appropriateness of the project length and allocated resources (financial request, human investments). Quality of the supervision of non-permanent staff.

## VIII. AGREEMENTS

The funding terms for the selected proposals shall be specified in the agreement between the sponsor and the coordinator's establishment. The main rules are listed in annex 2.

For all funders, in exchange for financial support, the research teams shall:

- Commit themselves to participate in actions to promote the results obtained during and/or at the end of the project (publications in peer-reviewed journals, presentations in conferences organised by the sponsor, contribution to summary reports, etc.),
- Supply, at the end of the project, a complete final report and a popular scientific report which can be used by Anses and the sponsor in its missions,

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<sup>1</sup> For example, any information that could be used to reproduce experiments or reanalyse data, inter-partner trials, multiple points of view held by partners, etc.

- Mention the National Research Program for Environmental and Occupational Health implemented by Anses.

Considerable importance is granted to the rigour with which the scientific project manager leads the project, which means that the contractual commitments for the timing of deliverables should be fully respected, as these determine the grant's staged payments which in turn affect the sponsors' budgetary management.

## IX. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION TERMS

Letters of intent must be submitted online by the scientific project managers no later than **August 30, 2013 midday**, French time. They shall be submitted using the **Research and Intelligence ("Recherche et Veille") platform** (in French), available via the websites of Anses and the co-sponsors of the call for proposals. The platform will be operational around the **July 5, 2013**.

**The project coordinator should carefully read eligibility rules listed in the present call for letter of intent or project stages.**

The letters of intent will then be evaluated and the result (authorized to submit a full project or not) will be transmitted to the project manager. For those whose letters of intent are shortlisted, complete applications must be submitted by the scientific project managers:

- 1) online, on the same platform, no later than **October, 4 midday**, French time. Following electronic applications, an acknowledgment of receipt will be automatically sent to the scientific project managers.
- 2) by sending Anses a certificate which is published by the platform after the application is submitted. One printed copy of this certificate, with all required signatures, must be sent by post to the following address no later than **November 1, 2013 midnight**:

Anses-DRV  
APR RF EST 2013  
27-31 avenue du Général Leclerc  
F-94701 MAISONS-ALFORT Cedex  
France

### Key dates

Wednesday, July 3 2013	Opening of the call
Around July 5, 2013	Opening of the platform for electronic submission
Friday, August 30, 2013 midday	Deadline for submission of letters of intent
Friday, September 6, 2013	The initial selection results sent to the scientific project managers.
Friday, October 4, 2013 midday	Deadline for submission of full projects
Friday, November 1, 2013 midnight	Deadline for submission of certificate
End of November 2013	Publication of the final selection results

## X. CONFIDENTIALITY

Anses and state agencies serving the program steering committee are bound to strict confidentiality on the content of submitted projects. For cartography purposes, however, they may share information on the laboratories or bodies, active in research topics covered by this call for proposals.

For all administrative or scientific information requests or questions, please contact the CRP unit :

Scientific issues	Laetitia Dubois	<a href="mailto:recherche@anses.fr">recherche@anses.fr</a>
Administrative issues	Aurélie Lainé	<a href="mailto:recherche@anses.fr">recherche@anses.fr</a> 01 56 29 52 86
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## ANNEX 1: Research Items

This appendix is a list of research items in relation which research projects should be defined. These research items should be understood as relevant to the domain covered by the call as defined in section III. Their order does not reflect any priority.

### Radiofrequency radiation (30 kHz to 300GHz)

- **Innovative approaches to investigate electromagnetic hypersensitivity:**
  - **Research of causality links:** Search for methodologies aiming at determining causality links between some characteristics of electromagnetic fields and symptoms, from provocation experiments to exposure measurement.
  - **Research for a mechanism :** Investigation of new mechanisms which could explain idiopathic environmental intolerance to electromagnetic fields
  - **Vulnerability factors:** Comparative studies involving control populations and populations with other medically unexplained syndromes. Research for specific markers of idiopathic environmental intolerance to electromagnetic fields. Research for diagnostic tools.
  - **Therapeutic measures:** Research on efficiency of therapeutic measures.
- **Metrology of electromagnetic fields :**
  - **Metrology:** Proposals of protocols and measurement techniques, in vitro and in vivo, of high frequency electromagnetic fields (100 MHz- 10 GHz).
  - **Exposure measurement:** Adaptation and development of tools to measure individual exposure (workers and general population). Development of multi band, portable, high sensitivity field meters adapted to indicator characterisation, for instance related to temporal evolution (signal waveform, rise time...).
- **Characterisation of exposure :**
  - **Exposure characterisation:** Characterization of exposure related to new radiation sources, new uses, new types of signals (including 4G), exposure to multiple sources, multiple frequencies and modulations.
  - **Indicators:** Definition of relevant indicators to represent individual exposure or population exposure (for instance waveforms or on/off transitions)
  - **Quantification of individual exposure,** particularly at the workplace, for children, in public transportations or around mobile phone masts.
  - **Search for biomarkers of exposure**

# ANNEX 3: Chargeable expenses

## ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Chargeable expenses should correspond to actual expenditure and should be strictly linked to the project's execution, exclusive of any profit margin. In particular, only expenses made between the start and the end of the project, as stipulated in the agreement, will be taken into account. It should be possible to prove the genuine nature of expenses incurred at any time. The recipients shall keep for four years all documents that justify the expenditure incurred under the project and shall submit them if requested by Anses.

### Personnel expenses

The only expenses accepted are: wages of fixed-term contract personnel, and professional fees, including social contributions and taxes on wages.

With the exception of public industrial and commercial entities, the personnel expenses taken into account in the amount of the financial contribution made by Anses cannot, under any circumstances, involve the permanent personnel of public entities.

### Overhead expenses and small-equipment expenses

The following expenses are accepted, including non-recoverable VAT:

- laboratory costs (procurement of products or consumables),
- office supplies,
- purchasing of patents or licenses,
- publication costs,
- travel expenses of permanent or temporary personnel assigned to the project, particularly for participation in Anses communication and dissemination events,
- conference registration fees related to the project,
- outsourced work (photos, etc.),
- maintenance of equipment purchased for the project,
- procurement of small equipment whose unit cost is less than €1,600 excl. tax

### Equipment expenses

Equipment expenses are expenses incurred for equipment whose unit value is greater than €1,600 excl. tax. Anses will take into account:

- All or part of the cost of this equipment, if it is not reusable after the project's completion, (non reusability should generally be the case).
- The share of depreciation calculated pro rata to the period of use if the equipment is reusable after the project's completion, unless an exception is made by Anses.

### General management fees

Part of the general administrative fees linked? to the project can count as expenses. These fees are limited to 4% of total expenses, unless an exception is made by Anses on the express request of the recipient with justification.

### **Service delivery**

Regardless of their legal status, recipients can contract work to or lease equipment from entities outside of the project. The cost of this work shall remain marginal in relation to the programme's total cost (less than 30% of this total cost), unless an exception is made by Anses on the express request of the recipient with justification). The costs of these services appear individually as overhead expenses.

Anses does not enter into commitments with service providers who therefore have no grounds upon which to make any claim on it if the recipient of a grant fails to respect its obligations. Services are provided exclusively for and under the supervision of the grant's recipient. In accordance with the rules in force, the recipient must pay for services as they are delivered irrespective of the date of the payment expected from Anses.

## **NON-ELIGIBLE EXPENSES**

The following expenses cannot be covered by Anses:

- Financial fixed assets and routine expenses to replace equipment;
- Expenses related to marketing, sales and distribution fees;
- Expenses related to land and buildings.