FONDATION D'ENTREPRISE HERMÈS

Call for research proposals, biodiversity and local knowledge

-

Adaptation strategies and heterogeneity of local knowledge faced with standardisation processes

1. Funding organisation
Fondation d'Entreprise Hermès

2. Geographical area
No geographical limitations

3. Funding
Resources available: 140 000 € maximum per project
Commencement of projects: 1st semester 2014
Duration of projects: 2 years
Number of projects selected: 3

4. Fondation d'Entreprise Hermès
The Fondation d'Entreprise Hermès bridges the gap between knowledge and innovation, which are addressed from a forward-looking approach against a backdrop of highly topical issues linked to sustainability and environmental protection. Through its commitment to environment and biodiversity, the Fondation d'Entreprise Hermès seeks to foster advocacy initiatives for the protection of the Earth's environment and, more specifically, its ecosystems. Recognising that research is a key factor in the decisions to be taken in order to revisit our understanding of biodiversity, and to ensure that humankind is restored to its position within ecosystems, the Fondation wishes to participate in research associating the development and promotion of local knowledge with the sustainable management of biodiversity and its resources.

5. Funding objectives
Fondation d'Entreprise Hermès funding is aimed at supporting action research that fosters local practices and knowledge for the sustainable management of biodiversity. The goals of this call for proposals are to enhance the emergence, effectiveness and resilience of local and global initiatives (cooperatives, value chains, labels, associations, etc.) that enable local

products to gain access to globalised networks in a responsible and humane manner that protects the environment for future generations, based on the recognition of local expertise and knowledge.

The objective is to determine to what extent local knowledge is capable of maintaining its diversity and heterogeneity while adopting a transformative and innovative approach, faced with the strong tendency of a globalised economy to encourage standardised practices, economies of scale and homogenisation, and thus a loss of diversity, in the agri-food, cosmetics and pharmaceutical sectors. In what ways do development and innovation concerning local knowledge, as well as its capacity for resilience, foster the diversity of practices and systems, but also the protection of biodiversity faced with standardisation processes? It is particularly important to understand the impact of the economic drivers of standardisation and of the concentration of sectors, along with that of standards and procedures (whether national, international or private) concerning the environmental and social sustainability of these sectors, as well as the mechanisms that enable quality criteria, local brands, local knowledge and biodiversity indicators to preserve their specificity and intrinsic qualities in order to maintain the diversity/heterogeneity needed for biodiversity protection and ecosystem resilience.

6. Context

The Rio conference in 1992 established the roadmap for a global partnership on sustainable development – which was reaffirmed in 2012 at Rio+20 – based on three main conventions that were reinterpreted at the local, national and regional levels for their practical implementation: climate, biodiversity and desertification. Since then, different rounds of negotiations have been held to define and determine the criteria, thresholds, mechanisms and obligations of each party.

Where biodiversity is concerned, these updates in the context of international negotiations are the opportunity for permanent, specific bargaining regarding the climate and desertification; biodiversity-rich countries (which are primarily tropical countries, and therefore developing countries) seek to obtain compensation corresponding to their conservation efforts. The other States seek to secure access to these resources and their appropriation at the lowest cost.

Within the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and beyond the goals of conservation and sustainable use, the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources is a key point of the negotiations. Article 8J of the Convention, which calls for Parties to "respect, preserve and maintain knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles", places these communities and their knowledge at the interface of numerous negotiations, ranging from the CBD to trade negotiations and intellectual property rights. The Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization, adopted in Nagoya (Japan) in October 2010, reinforces the geographical indications (GI) process and the role of communities.

Over the last 15 years, the implementation of national legal instruments facilitating the recognition of local, traditional and indigenous knowledge has become common practice in

the fight against biopiracy, for example, or with the emergence of GIs. The States concerned see GIs as a form of protection from international competition for the agricultural practices or production systems that provide them with certain non-market benefits. GIs also help to ensure better access to markets by means of recognised quality and processing procedures. More recently, GIs have been considered as factors of development in rural areas as well as tools for biodiversity management, encouraging the publicity given to traditional communities.

For the last few years, markets have revealed the convergence of environmental concerns and the evolution of trends towards higher quality products, produced using traditional knowledge, that need to be protected and differentiated from other products. We no longer talk about local origin only for French and European products; argan oil is associated with Morocco, just as basmati rice, neem oil, Colombian coffee, Ceylon tea, and Indonesian batiks are all associated with specific areas.

The example of GIs raises questions concerning the capacity of these tools to preserve a range of practices or agricultural systems, and especially queries whether maintaining heterogeneous practices in this way actually helps to preserve biodiversity. This example also questions whether these tools really enable local knowledge to take an innovative and transformative approach to these systems, or whether they in fact freeze practices to some extent.

Alongside the environmental and trade negotiations that enable these countries to call for extended international protection while demanding economic compensation and exemptions in the implementation of intellectual property rights, the States, and more specifically (but not only) the developed countries, are establishing a set of social, health and environmental standards aimed at protecting their populations. These norms are added to the standardisation and process simplification policies (for greater security and efficiency, but with no regard for the quality of products) and to the administrative procedures put in place by States as well as to the economic policies of the main sectors (agri-food, cosmetics or pharmaceuticals). Thus, the centralisation of abattoirs in France, the implementation of the REACH regulation in Europe, or the procurement policies of the main brokers are just some of the constraints on the viability of the economic activities of the local communities holding specific local knowledge that fosters cultural, biological and social diversity and, ultimately, their resilience.

7. Specificities of research proposals that will be funded

The action research proposals will need to show how they foster local practices and knowledge for the sustainable management of biodiversity. To do so, they must:

- identify and describe why the trends and constraints of the globalised economy (economies of scale, specialisation, standardisation, administrative regulations, etc.), but also the norms and standards, are either obstacles or factors of development for cultural, biological and social diversity linked to production processes stemming from local knowledge
- analyse the resilience and adaptation capacities of local knowledge faced with the growing homogenisation of products, processes, norms and standards, and their impacts on the protection of cultural, biological and social diversity
- analyse the articulation of the approaches and tools developed to promote products stemming from local knowledge with the norms and procedures of international standardisation
- study how local actors foster innovation to enable a better articulation between compliance with standards, the safeguard of local knowledge and the protection of cultural, biological and social diversity
- study the best conditions for disseminating the local practices and knowledge that are the most favourable to the construction of a mechanism to strengthen local communities or make them resilient
- determine the conditions for replicating good practices in order to help other communities to adapt to current standards and constraints
- study the capacities of communities holding local knowledge and participating in the protection of cultural, biological and social diversity to take part in the governance structures that produce these frameworks and standards.

Priority will go to those projects that cannot be funded through the normal research channels (ANR, EU Framework Programmes, etc., to be specified in the proposal) that help to support local communities at the same time as enabling an assessment of the impact of these approaches in terms of biodiversity.

8. Application procedure – Conditions relating to research projects

A letter of intent must be presented according to the model prescribed in annex 1.
The pre-selected projects must provide a full application according to the model prescribed in annex 2.

9. Selection criteria

The applications will be selected according to their contribution to the goals of the call for proposals, their scientific quality, their originality, their impact on the ground and the qualification of the teams concerned.

Special attention will be given to the following specific criteria:

- the quality of articulation with cooperation or action research programmes that have already concluded and that show understanding of active local knowledge networks for the sustainable management of biodiversity
- the capacity to support development and resilience in local communities
- the combination of conservation and development concerns, by proposing tools capable of increasing the capacity for innovation in local communities and by specifying methods of assessment for biodiversity and the preservation of local knowledge
- the capacity to foster environmentally-friendly practices and knowledge by maintaining social ties

Special attention will be given to multidisciplinary projects.

Finally, within 3 to 6 months of their start date, the project proposals must be followed up by a progress report in the form of an 8 to 10 page paper and/or a public presentation. Halfway through the project, an interim report will be produced, and the final report may also be the subject of a public presentation.

10. Submission procedure

The letters of intent must be sent before 8 July 2013 at 18:00 (Paris time) by email to the following address: clement.leduc@hermes.com

11. Schedule

Publication of call for proposals: 15 May 2013

Deadline for submission of letters of intent: 8 July 2013

Assessment by the scientific committee: 15 July – 31 July 2013

Deadline for submission of pre-selected proposals: 18 October 2013

Assessment by the scientific committee: 21 October – 31 October 2013

Selection of projects: 7 November 2013

12. Information

Clément Le Duc
Project Manager
Fondation d'entreprise Hermès
Tel: +33 (0)1 40 17 46 60
clement.leduc@hermes.com

ANNEX 1 – Model for the presentation of letters of intent

Acronym	
Project title	

1. **Description of scientific and technical partnership (1 page maximum)**

Project leader (name and title of coordinator, home institution)
Partners

2. **Origin of project (1 page maximum)**

Context and challenges of project
Problem(s) posed
Goal(s) of project

3. **Positioning of project in relation to existing research (1 page maximum)**

Positioning in relation to research already conducted by the different partners
Positioning in relation to the state of the art

4. **Description of scientific and technical content of project (2 pages maximum)**

Work programme planned (description of tasks and methods used)
Human, technical and financial resources deployed
Scheduling elements

5. **Expected outcomes (1 page maximum)**

Expected outcomes

6. **Simplified budget for project (2 pages maximum)**

Simplified budget overall and per partner (distinguishing between total expenditure and amount of funding requested)

ANNEX 2 – Model for the presentation of proposals

1. Summary of proposal
Title of proposal
Composition of team (researchers, organisation(s))
Total draft budget (inc. VAT), with no rounding off
Organisation managing funds
Duration
Summary of the proposal (1 page maximum): specify goals, methods and expected outcomes

2. Description of proposal (8 pages maximum)
Presentation of proposal

- research issue(s) addressed, assumption(s) and expected outcomes
- justification for project
- methodology and main stages of research (schedule to be provided)
- value for local communities
- risks associated with the project
- key bibliographical references for the issue(s) addressed

Team(s) mobilised

- composition, time spent on research and responsibility of each team member and of each partner (attach a short CV of 1 page maximum for the main members and partners, as well as a short presentation of the institution coordinating the research)
- effective participation in other national and/or foreign research programmes (on the same topics)
- effective involvement in active local knowledge networks on the sustainable management of biodiversity
- detailed draft budget (and justification for funding requests)

3 – Administrative information form

Name of contracting organisation

- trade name or business name
- full postal address, email address, telephone and fax numbers
- legal form and registration number
- first name, surname and role of person(s) with authority to enter contracts on behalf of the organisation
- projected cost of research: amount ex. VAT and inc. VAT, with no rounding off
- amount of funding requested inc. VAT
- duration of research in months