

Biodiversity and local knowledge

Promoting innovation in producer/consumer interfaces

Call for research proposals

Funded by

Fondation d'entreprise Hermès

Geographical area

No geographical boundaries

Investment

Level of funding: EUR 100,000 per project.

Projects begin in the first half of 2011.

Duration of projects: 2 years

Number of projects to be selected: 2

The Foundation

The *Fondation d'entreprise Hermès* works as a pathfinder to enable the formation of links between the culture of expertise and the momentum of innovation, considered from a prospective viewpoint, against a background of highly topical issues related to sustainability and environmental preservation.

Through its commitment to the themes of environment and biodiversity, the *Fondation d'entreprise Hermès* seeks to promote mobilization initiatives for the protection of the environment and, more particularly, the planet's ecosystems. Recognizing that research is a key factor in decisions that need to be taken to revise our understanding of biodiversity, and to ensure that humans find a place within ecosystems (and not dominate over them), the Foundation aims to participate in work involving local community development and sustainable management of biodiversity through the valorisation of resources.

Investment objectives

The financial investment of the *Fondation d'entreprise Hermès* is designed to support action research that promotes local practices and expertise for the sustainable management of biodiversity.

The objectives of this call for proposals are to promote the emergence and strengthen local and global initiatives (e.g. cooperatives, sectors, eco labelling initiatives, associations, etc.) that facilitate access to global networks for local production, through means that are responsible, humanitarian and respectful of the environment and the needs of present and future generations, based on the recognition of local expertise and know-how.

Beyond market studies or sector analyses, the projects must aim to understand the context of action, and the connection between local territories and globalized sectors and channels. In particular, the objective is to understand to what extent we can truly rely, in this globalized context, on: quality criteria; branding linked to *terroirs* or local expertise; or labelling relating to biodiversity, with the dual objective of sustaining activities and ceasing the degradation of biodiversity.

Specification of research proposals to receive funding

Proposals for action research must show the extent to which they will promote local practices and expertise for sustainable management of biodiversity. For this reason, they should focus on:

- identifying and characterizing the interfaces between producers and consumers that are most relevant to achieving the aim of linking economic development and biodiversity management;
- analyzing the most effective processes, rules and practices within these interfaces;
- analyzing their capabilities to preserve biodiversity;
- specifying the type of support required for local producers and/or interfaces (or any other local stakeholder in the commercial chain);
- studying the best conditions for the dissemination of local practices and expertise that are most favourable to reinforcing the resilience of local communities;
- determining the conditions of replicability of such schemes to help other communities adapt to the current standards and constraints.

Preference will be given to projects that cannot be funded by traditional research channels (ANR, FP7 etc ..., which may be specified in the proposal), and that encourage support for local communities, while allowing an evaluation of the impact of these approaches in terms of biodiversity.

Context

The Rio conference in 1992 established the roadmap for a global partnership on sustainable development which has crystallized around three main conventions, reinterpreted at local, national and regional levels for practical implementation: climate, biodiversity and desertification. Subsequent negotiation rounds have taken place to delimit and determine the criteria, thresholds, mechanisms and obligations of each contracting Party. Regarding biodiversity, these updates, in the context of international negotiations, are an occasion for ongoing and specific bargaining in relation to climate and desertification: states that possess significant biodiversity (primarily tropical biodiversity in developing countries) seek to obtain compensation in return for conservation efforts, while other states attempt to secure access to these resources and their assets at a lower 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 the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources is a central goal of the Convention. Article 8(j) of the Convention, which calls for respecting, preserving and maintaining "knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles" places these communities and their knowledge at the interface between multiple negotiations, from the CBD to trade negotiations at the WTO, including on intellectual

property rights. The *CBD Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of the Benefits Arising from their Utilization*, which was signed in Nagoya (Japan) in October 2010, confirms the role of communities.

Over the last fifteen years, the establishment of national legislation to facilitate the recognition of local, ancestral and indigenous expertise has also contributed to fight biopiracy and misappropriation of genetic resources and traditional knowledge.

States concerned also consider the development of geographic indications (GIs) as an important tool which may allow better access to markets through recognized quality and processing techniques. More recently, GIs have been considered as factors of rural development as well as tools for biodiversity management, giving publicity to traditional communities.

In recent years, markets have shown a convergence of environmental concerns, with markets recognising the value of quality products that are derived from traditional expertise, which require protection and differentiation from other products. A term such as *terroir* is no longer reserved for French and European products, argan oil is now associated with Morocco and in the same way, basmati rice, Neem, Colombian coffee, Ceylon tea and Indonesian batiks are associated with their respective territories of origin.

Beyond their function as market differentiators, GIs are also seen as tools for the sustainable management of biodiversity and the implementation of the CBD.¹

States are involved in the protection of intellectual property rights and strive to promote their national economic growth. Therefore, some of them have recognised the value of strengthening the regulatory framework for the protection of GIs. Geographical indications are place names used to identify the origin and quality, reputation or other characteristics of products (for example, “Champagne”, “Tequila” or “Roquefort”). Two issues are debated in the World Trade Organization under the Doha mandate: creating a multilateral register for wines and spirits; and extending the higher (Article 23) level of protection beyond wines and spirits. Some developing countries are using environmental and trade negotiation rounds as opportunities to claim internationally extended protection for GIs, while demanding more flexibility in the implementation of intellectual property rights.

The convergence of environmental issues and changes in food markets concerned with the quality and origins of products is placing the expertise and the tools of protection and differentiation at the heart of actions taken by economic and political stakeholders. Differentiation by quality in terms of taste, landscape, heritage, environment or culture is at the heart of the change wrought in the international markets that have been oriented towards quality and origin since the late 1990s.

Regarding *terroirs*, their origin, history, reputation and particular qualities are put forward to define their uniqueness. The classification of *terroirs* and the products derived from them (e.g. foods, cosmetics, agro-tourism services) involve elements such as linking products to a certain time, or to a particular place. Economic stakeholders (governments, companies, associations and producers) use identifiers embedded into heterogeneous development pathways to distinguish themselves from the competition and to meet the expectations of

¹ Biodiversity and Local Ecological Knowledge in France. Cirad-Iddri-IFB-INRA, 2005. Available in French on http://www.iddri.org/Publications/Ouvrages-en-partenariat/Biodivweb_fr.pdf

consumers and citizens. These groups of distinctive labels divide markets by enhancing the characteristics of a product or a *terroir*.

GIs, which are now advocated by many countries worldwide, have become an inescapable issue. Requests to extend GIs to products other than wines and spirits are endorsed by more than one hundred countries in the WTO. Despite the difficulties encountered for new wine-producing countries that emphasize the importance of branding, compatibility between trademarks and GIs is increasingly recognized and some U.S. producers are converting to appellations of origin, constituting transatlantic alliances (notably successful examples include Champagne and Roquefort, which combine brand and AOC protection, but also today there is the example of wines from the Napa Valley).

Convergences between concerns for biodiversity protection and the protection of knowledge that has been put into circulation through the new economic "bandwagons" of origin and quality are reinforcing procedures and pressures on local practices: *terroirs*, indigenous groups and ancestral expertise therefore develop new forms of organization.

Reminder of current programmes and research topics to be explored by this call for proposals:

A number of research programmes are being led by different international research teams to identify and analyze the conditions for the emergence of GIs across the world (Dolphin², Synergi³); others focus on biodiversity, local knowledge and links with heritage values (Biodivalloc⁴, Home Gardens of Ethiopia⁵, etc). Some regional research programmes focus on the Mediterranean and seek to identify GIs and to understand the interactions between human practices, evolution in plants and ecosystems and cultural representations (Femise/IG-PTM⁶ or FruitMed⁷). Finally, other programmes are focused on innovation diffusion and Local Agri-Food Systems (SYAL⁸).

Research questions

To continue this train of thought, the purpose here is to analyze the relationships between producers and consumers, between discourse and practice, between institutions and local communities. The study shall also consider theory and practice, which organize and share principles, norms and rules while reinterpret them as the same time. This angle is not only speculative: it seeks to understand the dynamics that constitute response mosaics within a development regime that is aligned towards quality and origin. The purpose is to understand how the design of those practical solutions for local communities offer access to markets and allow them to maintain their practices based on sustainable biodiversity management.

² http://www.origin-food.org/index_dolphins.htm

³ <http://www.origin-food.org/2005/base.php?cat=20>

⁴ <http://www.mnhn.fr/colloque/localiserlesproduits/>

⁵ <http://www.homegardensofethiopia.com/>

⁶ http://www.iamm.fr/recherche/projets/ressources/fiche_recherche_femise.pdf

⁷ http://www.iamm.fr/recherche/projets/ressources/fiche_recherche_fruitmed.pdf

⁸ <http://gis-syal.agropolis.fr/>

In the context of international competition, the ability to enact environmental and trade standards is vital. This ability requires stakeholders to exhibit:

- an ability to manage the specific local resources (not, for example, to allow uncontrolled logging of rare tree species from primary forests)
- a coordination of policies at different scales (local, national, regional)
- a communication strategy
- a capacity for sectoral organization
- a policy of support and adaptation for local producers

However, a multitude of stakeholders, practices and interfaces exist between the main private actors and governments, whose survival depends on their skills to organize and impose their standards. In other words, to organize themselves so that they are not deprived of knowledge or practices, either by these private groups or through an inadequate trade regimes. Such practices and expertise have already been partially identified by research and cooperation programmes, but the ability to create strong links between producers and consumers remains an important social issue.

In addition to issues of visibility, legitimacy and legibility of labelling, a problem arises concerning the ability of stakeholders to demonstrate organizational and adaptational intelligence towards biodiversity concerns. The ability to delimit, and to include or not a renowned product within a set of binding rules that limit market access, such as the EU market for example, presents a competitive positioning challenge for quality goods markets.

The following questions are raised about the producer/consumer interfaces presented to markets with limited access conditions

- How to determine an original and relevant interface? And how to identify the stakeholders that contribute to mobilize and preserve the originality and relevance of local knowledge?
- What are the existing rules and practices in the direct producer-consumer channels that allow a free flow of theoretical and practical knowledge, while ensuring high levels of quality and of sustainable biodiversity management?
- How do the communities concerned adapt to global changes and to economic acceleration, while mobilizing local knowledge and practices (sustainable and innovative approaches)?
- How to adapt original and personalized organizational tools and systems to make them compatible with international trade and global environment rules?

Proposals will be limited to a particular aspect, to be complimented by other theoretical and wider research.

Response terms - conditions for research projects

Research proposals must be submitted in the form prescribed in annex 1.

Selection criteria

Proposals will be selected according to their contribution to the objectives of the call for proposals, their scientific quality, their originality, their field impact and the research team's qualifications.

Particular attention will be given to the following specific criteria:

- Quality of the links to existing cooperative or action research programmes, attesting the knowledge of local expertise networks that are active in terms of sustainable biodiversity management.
- Ability to support the development of producer/consumer interfaces that strengthen the reliability and durability of links between producers and consumers.
- Quality of the combination of conservation and valorisation issues, by providing specific tools that can strengthen interactions between local markets and groups (development of tools to facilitate exchange processes or mechanisms to choose between different quality labels), and to specify methods for assessing the effects of the project in terms of biodiversity.
- Ability to provide feedback and to disseminate news of the everyday life, and the whole existence, of those who are part of our globalized era. In order to take interactions in temporal dimensions into account, special attention must be given to adjustments and to individual and collective trajectories.
- Ability to promote practices and knowledge that respect the environment with the maintenance of social links.

Particular attention will be given to projects with an interdisciplinary character.

Finally, within three to six months of their launch date, proposed projects must be able to deliver an intermediate account in the form of an eight to ten page report and/or a public presentation. Halfway through the project, an intermediate report must be produced, and the final report can also include a public presentation.

Submission terms

Proposals must be received via email before 6pm on 31st March 2011 at the following address: clement.leduc@hermes.com

Schedule

Publication of the call for proposals: February 15th 2011

Deadline for proposal submission: April 15th 2011

Assessment by the scientific committee: April-May 2011

Project selection: May 16th 2011

Information

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ANNEX 1 – Format for research proposal presentation

1 – Summary of the proposal

Proposal title

Team composition (researchers, organization(s))

Estimated total budget (including tax), without rounding

Funding management organization

Duration

Proposal summary (1 page maximum): specify the objectives, methods and expected results

2 – Description of the proposal (8 pages maximum)

Proposal outline

- Research question(s), assumptions(s) and expected results
- Project justification
- Methodology and main stages of research (schedule to be provided)
- Usefulness to local and indigenous communities
- Risks associated with project realisation
- Main bibliographic references regarding the addressed issue(s)

Mobilized team(s)

- Composition, time engaged in research and responsibility of each team member and each partner (attach a CV of 1 page maximum for the key members and partners and a summary presentation of the research coordination institution).
- Effective participation to other national and/or foreign research programmes (on the same themes).
- Effective involvement in local knowledge networks that are active in terms of sustainable management of biodiversity.

Detailed projected budget (and justification for funding requests)

3 – Administrative information form

Designation of the contracting organization:

- corporate or company name
- full postal and email address, telephone and fax
- legal form and tax code of organization, status
- first name, surname, function of the person(s) entitled to engage the organization in terms of contract

Estimated cost of work: amount excluding tax, the VAT and the amount including tax, without rounding

Amount of funding requested, including tax

Duration of the research in months

