

# National Research Program for Environmental and Occupational Health

## “Radiofrequencies and Health”

### 2016 Call for Research Proposal

**Deadline for submission of the letters of intent: December 17, 2015**  
**Deadline for submission of the complete proposals: March 24, 2016**

**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 labor, and associates several co-funders: ADEME, ITMO Cancer of AVIESAN alliance under the “Cancer Plan”, the Ministry in charge of agriculture under the “Ecophyto Plan” (in relation with ONEMA). In addition, funding from a tax on radio transmitters is to be added to other funds for projects on health effects of radio frequencies. 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.

This program results in the launch of calls for research proposals. In this context, two calls are launched in late 2015: the present call, dedicated to the theme "radiofrequency and health" and a second one a wide area (excluding radiofrequencies), dedicated to the theme "radiofrequency and health".

## II. OVERVIEW OF THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS

This call for Research Projects (APR) on "Radiofrequency and Health" was launched following the Anses report on the same subject, published in October 2013<sup>1</sup>. The CPR is aiming at creating new knowledge, especially to fill gaps or remove the doubts that have been highlighted in the report. In addition, it aims to expand the size of the research community involved in the field of radio frequencies and health. During the selection process, a strong emphasis will be placed on the quality of the project methodology<sup>2</sup>, insofar as they are intended to be used in future assessments.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.anses.fr/fr/documents/AP2011sa0150Ra.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> In the October 2013 report, it is mentioned on page 341 "ensure the methodological quality of the experimental protocols and the rigor of the analysis and interpretation of data from in vitro and in vivo studies by research teams both on the part of RF exposure (exposure characterization, signal shape, justification for the choice of the type of exposure, etc..) that on the part relating to biological experimentation (blind experiment, appropriate positive and negative controls, allowing the interpretation of amplitude of changes related to RF exposure, identification of false positives, repeating experiments, sufficient statistical power, etc.)...."

### III. SCOPE OF THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS

**The call for proposals deals mainly with the assessment and analysis of 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 designed as research projects with a clearly identified goal. This excludes projects that look like contributions to larger projects.

These research projects will be conducted by a single team or a consortium involving several partners. Each team will have a well identified scientific leader. The project will be presented as a single proposal, the carrier being the scientist in charge of one of the teams. Funding is requested to complete the study or project. The rules are set out in Annex 2.

Two types of research proposals are expected in 2016:

#### **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 able to tackle all issues from engineering to biology. 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. 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 ministries involved in the scope covered by the call for proposals<sup>3</sup>. 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. Members of the steering committee can be also consulted with respect with criterion 3 and the closeness of the letter of intent with their priorities. 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. This collective opinion takes also into account the available funds and priorities of funders. The SC can also give advice on appropriateness 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 at the end of the selection process on the sponsors' websites.

## **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:

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<sup>3</sup> As defined in annex II.

### **Proposal characteristics**

1. The projects must lie within the research domain covered by the call for proposal as defined in section III.
2. The proposals' characteristics must be compatible with those listed in Section III.
3. The project must not contain actions that have already been funded under another call for projects. If there is any ambiguity, holders should describe the interactions of the project with other sources of funding.

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

1. This call for proposals is open to all research teams<sup>4</sup>, 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 associate at least 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 and project review, the CRP's text is available in English on the Anses website (same address as the French version).
  - a. Any proposal submitted by a French team can include a partnership with one or more foreign teams.
  - b. Any proposal submitted by a foreign team – or a team that belongs to an international organisation (even if it is based in France) – must include a French academic partner.
4. A RPSC member cannot be the scientific leader of any team involved in the research proposal.

### **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.

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<sup>4</sup> About the eligibility of Anses teams, Anses follows the recommendation of its deontology committee <https://www.anses.fr/fr/system/files/DEON-Ft-2013003.pdf>

## 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 and/or risk for ecosystems,
- 2) Scientific novelty: proposals shall be justified with regard to research undertaken at French, European and international levels. When the aim of the project is to repeat a study, originality will be assessed on the method used to maximize the quality of the results of this second study,
- 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,
- 5) Organisational and partnership excellence (the proposal must include a provisional project timetable),
- 6) Consortium excellence. Scientific output of the requesting parties, distribution of activities among teams.
- 7) Appropriateness of the project length and allocated resources (financial request, human investments). Quality of the supervision of non-permanent staff.
- 8) Confidence with respect to project results. For projects that may be the subject of controversy, any measures taken to ensure confidence in the quality of results<sup>5</sup>. When the aim of the project is to reproduce the result of a precedent study, the authors of the first study can join the consortium but may not be the project leader.

## VIII. AGREEMENTS

The funding terms for the selected proposals shall be specified in the agreement between the sponsor and a "coordinator's" establishment<sup>6</sup>. This establishment will be in most of the case the one to which partner 1 is associated. 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.),

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<sup>5</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.

<sup>6</sup> Note that this agreement will be written in French

- 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,
- Mention the National Research Program for Environmental and Occupational Health implemented by Anses, in particular in publications.

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 Thursday, the **17<sup>th</sup> of December 2015, 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 at the **end of October 2015**.

**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 projects submitted to the present call it is desirable that the text is written in English to allow evaluation on a broader scale. 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 **March 24, 2016 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 **April 22, 2016, midnight**:

Anses-DRV  
APR RF EST 2016  
ACI-COP-2-028  
14 rue Pierre et Marie Curie  
F-94701 MAISONS-ALFORT Cedex  
France

### Provisional key dates

Mid October 2015	Opening of the call
End of October 2015	Opening of the platform for electronic submission
17 December 2015, midday	Deadline for submission of letters of intent
February 2016	The initial selection results sent to the scientific project managers.
24 March 2016, midday	Deadline for submission of full projects
22 April 2016 midnight	Deadline for submission of certificate
July 2016	Transmission of results to the scientific project manager

## X. CONFIDENTIALITY

Members of the Scientific Committee of the research program, as well as experts called in the scientific evaluation of projects are subject to strict confidentiality on the content of the projects submitted to the call.

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

For projects not selected for funding, the records will be kept confidential. For projects selected for funding, the research content will be kept confidential. However, Anses publish the summary of the project as submitted to the present call. On the other hand, each funder may use this work for its internal needs in the terms he will define in agreement with the carrier. Finally, scientific reports issued at the end of the work will be submitted to the reviewers who therefore have access to their content.

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	Aur�lie Pajon	<a href="mailto:recherche@anses.fr">recherche@anses.fr</a> 01 56 29 52 86
	Delphine Lascar	<a href="mailto:recherche@anses.fr">recherche@anses.fr</a> 01 56 29 18 88

## ANNEX 1: Research Items

These questions are focused on the effects of radio frequencies, defined in the present project as frequencies in the range from 8.3 kHz to 300 GHz. In the case of projects about electromagnetic hypersensitivity, taking into account a broader frequency range can be useful and is thus authorized. The effects of electromagnetic fields can be studied for these fields alone or in combination with a cofactor. In addition to the signals corresponding to the current exposures, project leaders are invited to address new sources of exposure and associated signals (such as connected objects) and to the effect of various modulations used for mobile communication.

### ***Research for action mechanisms of radiofrequencies at the cell level***

1. In vitro, in vivo and clinical studies on the mechanisms of action of radiofrequency at the cell level, in particular:
  - repair of DNA using deficient models for key factors of repair systems
  - oxidation of nuclear and mitochondrial DNA
  - the expression of genes, in particular the adaptive response
  - carcinogenesis, from induction to the development of various types of cancer
  - pathologies associated with cell degeneration
  - female fertility
  - Studies revisiting previous works on biological effects (see list in the "RF and Health" report (Anses, October 2013), pages 342 and following.)

### ***Research for physiological responses or health effects of radiofrequencies***

1. In vivo or clinical studies on physiological responses to radiofrequencies, in particular :
  - sleep, on circadian rhythms
  - metabolism and cerebral blood flow, cognitive functions
  - reproduction and development on several generations of animals
  - heart rate, etc.
  - To check previous studies suggesting physiological or health effects (see list in the "RF and Health" report (Anses, October 2013), pages 342 and following.)
2. Clinical or epidemiological studies on possible effects of RF energy on health, including:
  - Cancer (also taking into account co exposure), fertility disorders, neurodegenerative diseases, etc. ;
  - Long-term effects of sleep physiological changes related to radio frequencies.

In particular:

  - on possibly more sensitive populations (epileptic patients, children, etc.) or less well documented (women, elderly) or especially vulnerable (workers);
  - with a characterization of the exposure of the most accurate target populations (data operators, for example);
3. Research on the effect of animal populations for instance bees.

### ***Electromagnetic hypersensitivity***

1. Search for links between some characteristics of the electromagnetic field and symptoms experienced by "EHS" people (provocation experiments, continuous exposure measurements and collection of symptoms, etc.).
2. Clinical characterization of functional symptoms (sleep, digestion) experienced by "EHS" people (measurement or questionnaires).
3. Investigation of tools to characterize "EHS" subject, physiological markers, biological markers, specific genetic markers.
4. Investigation of mechanisms which could explain electromagnetic hypersensitivity (for instance neurotransmitters, cryptochroms)
5. Investigation of vulnerabilities factors (comparative studies using control populations and populations with medically unexplained syndromes, for example);
6. Research on the effectiveness of therapeutic measures (symptom management such as tinnitus, migraine, effects of dietary supplements or of probiotics).

### ***Effets of uses of new technologies***

1. Impact of organizational change and working conditions related to new wireless technologies on stress, sleep, fatigue, mental symptoms, addiction, etc. (in general and occupational population).

### ***Exposure characterization***

1. Characterize public exposure to various sources of electromagnetic fields, especially for temporal monitoring of evolution in the outdoor or indoor environment.
2. Undertake work to correlate the spatial description of the levels of electromagnetic fields with the geographical distribution of the population, to provide an initial characterization of residential exposure.
3. Characterize exposures to electromagnetic field of worker in particular those due to evolution of technologies.

# ANNEX 2: 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.