

For each STEREO **Thematic network, Exploration, Shared cost** or **Development of applications** project, a Steering Committee must be convened to supervise the progress and scientific results of the project.

The Steering Committee is tasked with:

- Assessing the progress of the project.
- Providing recommendations that must be followed unless a strong justification is presented to depart from them, in response to scientific, technical, and methodological needs, as well as interim results.
- Assessing the impact of the partnership/project and the synergy between the various tasks and partners.
- Assessing and guiding exploitation activities and help disseminating the results nationally and internationally.
- Drawing attention to serious problems within the partnership/project which could result in the termination of the agreement.
- For **thematic network projects** a mid-term extended Steering Committee meeting must be organized. During this half-time evaluation the Steering Committee must take a decision about the continuation of the PROJECT.

A. COMPOSITION

A **regular Steering Committee** should include at least:

- 2 international (not Belgian nor Belgium-based) scientific experts (3 for the Thematic network projects) with the necessary competence in the scientific and technical domains of the project
- Representative(s) of the Belgian Federal Science Policy Office (programme managers)

In addition, following types of expert can be involved:

- Potential users (mandatory for application oriented projects)
- Representative(s) of STEREO project with common ground

The project's coordinator/promotor proposes a selection of experts for the Steering Committee which **must be approved by the programme managers** prior to a description of the composition of this committee in the initial report. Only after approval by the programme managers shall the coordinator contact the potential members of the steering committee to invite them and to explain what will be their mandate.

Potential users of the results of the study can be included in the regular Steering Committee and/or dedicated meetings with the users can be organised. The modalities of the interaction with users shall be established by the programme managers upon consultation with the network.

B. TIMETABLE AND AGENDA

If there is no Kick-off Meeting (see below) stipulated in the contract, a Steering Committee must be organized at the end of each project year. This means for instance 3 committees for a three year project.

The coordinator of the project shall contact the Steering Committee members early enough to be able to find a date when the project's partners, the programme managers and the experts are available.

Prior to the meeting, the coordinator will provide the experts with the annual report of the project and other relevant documents.

The agenda of the Steering Committee in general is as follows:

- Introduction by BELSPO with a description of the STEREO programme and the mandate of the committee (for the first steering committee or kick-off meeting only);
- Presentations on the progress of the different work packages by the partners of the project (including the international partner), with enough time for discussions with the experts;
- Presentation of the project's objectives - activities for the next year;
- Closed door deliberation of the Steering Committee;
- Oral feedback on the deliberation.

A written feedback compiling all the remarks and recommendations of the Steering Committee will be transferred to the project's partners by the programme managers.

The coordinator of the project has to provide the experts and programme managers with a written answer to the remarks and recommendations. This document shall be sent to BELSPO and the experts within a couple of weeks after the Steering Committee and shall be integrated in the first report submitted to BELSPO after the Steering Committee.

C. VENUE

It is recommended rotating the venue of the meetings among the institutes of each partner, including the international partner. If a partner does not have an adequate meeting room

available on the premises or when a study site visit is foreseen in the agenda, an external meeting room can be booked.

D. BUDGET

Following expenses are borne by the STEREO IV programme for an amount of max. 4,500 EUR per meeting:

COSTS INCURRED BY THE EXPERTS:

- the travelling and accommodation costs:
 - Only economy (plane) or 2nd class (train) tickets are reimbursed. For an expert coming by car, the km cost as used internally by BELSPO shall apply.
 - For short distance travels the experts will avoid as much as possible the use of the plane!
 - The cost of a hotel room in Belgium is max. 200€, in line with acceptable costs in neighbouring countries;
 - The cost of a hotel room abroad should be in line with what is recommended for Belgian civil servants;
 - The number of nights should be as low as possible. For experts coming from outside Europe, however, it may be considerably cheaper to spend some additional nights (Saturday night rule).
- The experts can send their invoice either directly to BELSPO *via the on line reimbursement form* (<https://eo.belspo.be/en/stereo-reimbursement-form>) or via the meeting organisers who might reimburse first if this is speedier. Alternatively, an organiser might book hotel rooms for the experts and invoice the cost to BELSPO.

FIXED DAILY ALLOWANCE FOR THE EXPERTS

- This allowance should cover meals and local transportation (bus, metro, taxi) and amounts to 35 € for half a day (ending/starting at noon).

EVALUATION FEE FOR THE EXPERTS

- An evaluation fee is foreseen for experts participating at kick-off meetings (300 €) and mid-term evaluations (500 €). Mid-term evaluation is only applicable to Thematic network projects!

COSTS INCURRED BY THE MEETING ORGANISER (PROJECT COORDINATOR OR PROMOTOR)

- The coffee breaks, the lunch during the meeting and dinner. For meetings lasting a day, it is advised to offer a good lunch (not too long) outside the meeting room. Dinner is customary for the evening in between the 2 days foreseen for a mid-term Steering

Committee (see below) and can be offered on the eve of or following a one day meeting abroad or at a remote partner institute or meeting location.

- For the catering during the meeting the local organizer will favour local and seasonal food and select caterers promoting sustainable containers and avoiding the use of plastics
- The hire of a meeting room;
- Other (e.g. transportation to visit the study site);
- Expenses made on behalf of the experts (hotel, transportation,...).

These costs shall be paid by the organiser and then be submitted to BELSPO for reimbursement.

- **In case the costs are paid by the local organizer (private bank account), the reimbursement by BELSPO can be requested using the online form: <https://eo.belspo.be/en/stereo-reimbursement-form>;**
- **In case the costs are paid by the institution, the institution must send an expense statement together with tickets and receipts to BELSPO (financialreporting@belspo.be) with the programme managers in copy (schy@belspo.be and vdab@belspo.be) for approval. After approval of the costs, please mail your invoice and supporting documents to invoice@belspo.be.**

In any case no extra VAT should be added to the costs submitted to BELSPO by the organizers (this VAT being already paid to the caterers, hotels...)

Additional costs shall be at the expense of the project.

The budget available for the organization of a mid-term meeting or a meeting abroad can exceptionally be higher than 4500 €, subject to the prior approval of the programme managers, because of eventual higher costs of living, the additional experts, and the longer duration (see below).

E. KICK-OFF MEETING

Upon request by the programme committee, a Kick-off Meeting can be organized at the beginning of the project. The goal of this meeting is to have an amended version of the project approved by the experts of the steering committee. The rules set for the steering committees apply also for this kind of meeting.

Because there is not yet an annual activity report at this stage, the coordinator will provide the experts with the results of the evaluation of the initial proposal and with the Annex I to the contract describing the new methodology and work packages.

F. MID-TERM STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

This type of meeting is only applicable for Thematic network projects. The rules set for the regular Steering Committees also apply also for this kind of meeting. In addition, the following applies:

- **extended composition:** the number of experts must be extended (in agreement with programme managers) to be sure that all the work packages of the project are covered;
- **extended duration:** the duration is preferably one day and a half to allow to discuss all work packages;
- **higher budget at disposal:** the budget may exceed 4,500€;
- **a dinner** must be organized to allow for additional brainstorming and networking.

At the end of the meeting the experts have to approve the continuation of the project.