

# BELMONT FORUM

## Memorandum of Understanding for the Belmont Forum Collaborative Research Actions

### between

- The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO), Australia
- São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP), Brazil
- Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), Canada
- Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), Canada
- Agence Nationale de la Recherche (ANR), France
- Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG), Germany
- Ministry of Earth Sciences, Government of India (MoES), India
- Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST), Japan
- National Research Foundation (NRF), South Africa
- Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), United Kingdom
- Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), United Kingdom
- National Science Foundation (NSF), USA

Referred to hereinafter as “the Partner Organizations”

### Purpose

Earth System science has provided society with a valuable, basic understanding of the environment and human society as interconnected systems; namely, how humans are changing the global environment, and how these changes may affect human well-being. To be most valuable, this knowledge must be provided on time and space scales that enable effective decision-making and support equitable economic and social development. To describe this need the Belmont Forum has established the ‘Belmont Challenge’ - “To deliver knowledge needed for action to mitigate and adapt to detrimental environmental change and extreme hazardous events”.

This requires:

- Information on the state of the environment, through enhanced observing systems;
- Assessments of risks, impacts and vulnerabilities, through regional and decadal analysis and prediction;
- Enhanced environmental information service providers to users;
- Inter- and transdisciplinary research which takes account of coupled natural, social and economic systems;
- Effective integration and coordination mechanisms, to address interdependencies and marshal the necessary resources.

To help take forward these challenges the Belmont Forum has joined together with ICSU, ISSC, UNEP, UNESCO and UNU to develop a 10-year initiative which aims to deliver knowledge to enable societies to meet their sustainable development goals in the coming decades – Future Earth. The Belmont Forum Collaborative Research Actions can be seen to support part of this initiative by promoting examples of innovative types of research.

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This Memorandum of Understanding, between the Belmont Forum Partner Organizations, outlines an arrangement to support international collaborative research through joint calls for funding in support of such relevant initiatives.

## Definitions

- “*Belmont Forum*” is an informal high level group of the world’s major and emerging funders of global environmental change research and international science councils. It aims to accelerate delivery of the international environmental research most urgently needed to remove critical barriers to sustainability by aligning and mobilising international resources.
- “*Call*” is the overarching term for the process undertaken to fund proposals from the research community to address a Collaborative Research Action.
- “*Collaborative Research Actions*” are mechanisms to deliver international collaboration. Their principles are that they will:
  - Address the Belmont Challenge priorities (i.e. societally relevant global environmental change challenges)
  - Lever Belmont Forum member’s existing investments through international added value, where appropriate
  - Bring together new partnerships of natural scientists, social scientists, and users
  - Allow Partner Organizations to fund their own eligible communities – there will be no requirement for ‘common pot’ and funding across borders.
- “*External Reviewer*” is an external expert that provides a written peer review of a proposal.
- “*Group of Program Co-ordinators*” (*GPC*) is responsible for the practical implementation of the Call. It is composed of one mandated representative from each Partner Organization participating in the Call, who provides overall responsibility for their Organization’s involvement in the Call.
- “*Implementation Plan*” is the detailed documentation to support each Call that specifies the Partner Organizations involved, their financial contributions and the process for that Call.
- “*National Contact Point*” (*NCP*) represents a Partner Organization and can be contacted by applicants and the Program Office to give information on or explain the Call procedures as well as national rules and procedures.
- “*Panel of Experts*” is a committee of experts that reviews and ranks proposals.
- “*Partner Organization*” is a funding organization that may participate in a Call in support of a Belmont Forum Collaborative Research Action
- “*Theme Program Office*” is established by one of the Partner Organizations’ Head Offices which, for the entire period of one Call, is entrusted by the Partner Organizations to prepare, publish, and manage one particular Call in cooperation and consultation with the Group of Program Coordinators.

## The Partner Organizations therefore agree as follows:

### I. General objective

1. The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is to establish the procedures for Calls for proposals for the trans-national Belmont Forum Collaborative Research Actions on societally relevant global environmental change challenges. The Partner Organizations agree to define themes on a periodic basis, disseminate the Call and establish the application, review and funding procedures for each Call.

