



CALL STRATEGIC LITERACY AND SOCIETAL RESILIENCE INFOSESSION

!! Subject to approval of Council of Ministers!!

4 February 2026

Programme



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Context and objectives

- Disinformation, hybrid threats and geopolitical uncertainties → Strategic literacy of civilians and policymakers is essential
- Our society needs a better understanding of how complex security is, as well as resilience at both the individual and collective levels.

→ The Belgian Defence wants to play a leading role in these matters, in collaboration with the academic world.

The Royal Higher Institute for Defence (RHID) launches a call for **doctoral projects** that contribute to **reinforcing strategic literacy and societal resilience** in Belgium.

Objective :

- To provide added value to the development of a strategic vision on defence and security
- To submit innovative research projects that increase the national capacity for strategic analysis while helping to raise public awareness on the role of the Belgian Defence, the impact of international tensions and the importance of broad societal engagement in security and defence.



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Timeline and Content



SLSR CALL	INDICATIVE BUDGET (in M€)
To grant four doctoral projects	2.0

Timeline and Theme

Context

- Disinformation, hybrid threats and geopolitical uncertainties → Strategic literacy of civilians and policymakers is essential
- Our society needs a better understanding of how complex security is, as well as resilience at both the individual and collective levels.

Research Scope

The research focuses on :

A proposal that is based on various disciplines – such as **political sciences, history, philosophy, psychology, sociology, law or economy** – and contributes to **strengthening strategic analysis capabilities** regarding topics relevant to the Belgian Defence and national security. Multidisciplinary and comparative approaches are encouraged to feed a culture of net assessment.

Potentially topics are the logic of deterrence across the entire conflict spectrum, the role of competition in the cognitive domain, the return of nuclear issues, the contemporary form that societal mobilisation for protracted conflict can take, the increasing need for interdepartmental coordination,...

Impact for Defence

- To provide added value to the development of a strategic vision on defence and security
- To increase the national capacity for strategic analysis while helping to raise public awareness on the role of the Belgian Defence, the impact of international tensions and the importance of broad societal engagement in security and defence



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Timeline and Content

	Date	At / via
Information session	4 Feb 2026 (14h)	online
Deadline proposals	16 Mar 2026 (18h)	Mail
Evaluation of the proposals with a shortlist as result	17 Mar – 16 April 2026	RHID
Panel evaluation, including interview of candidates	17 April – 8 May 2026	RHID
Selection proposal formulated by the scientific committee of the RHID	28 May 2026	NA
Final selection of proposals by the board of directors of the RHID and allocation of projects	9 June 2026	NA
Communication of results to applicants	15 June 2026	Mail
Start of the projects	1 October 2026	NA

The rules of the SLSR Call

Eligibility Criteria

Candidates must have

- Belgian nationality
- Hold a master's degree in a relevant discipline, which they obtained prior to being appointed.
- Knowledge of both national languages, as well as English, is an advantage.

■ The rules of the SLSR Call

Research Ethics

- Full proposal contains an ethics self-assessment
- The Ethical Advisory Board of the RHID will assess this information and can advise how to deal with ethical aspects of the proposal

■ The rules of the SLSR Call

Projects

- Duration: 4 years
- Start of selected projects: October 2026
- Budget rules: 100% eligible cost financed by Defence

The rules of the SLSR Call

Budget Rules

Category of expenditure	Rules
STAFF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff members bound contractually to a public institution - full time or part time - cannot apply for him/herself for Defence staff budget for that part. • The funding is limited to the time and period in which the staff participates in the project.
GENERAL OPERATING COSTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no detailed justification is required for these costs, the administration must keep these invoices in its accounts in the event of an audit.
SPECIFIC OPERATING COSTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Described in the proposal • Justified by invoices during project
OVERHEAD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10% of total staff and operating costs

The rules of the SLSR Call

Budget Rules

Category of expenditure	Rules
EQUIPMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Described in the proposal• Justified by invoices during project
SUBCONTRACTING	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not applicable

Submission and Evaluation Procedure

RHID Website

<https://www.defence-institute.be/>

Available documents:

- Information document, incl. submission & evaluation guidelines and budget rules
- FAQ
- Template proposal
- Gantt Chart
- Budget file



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Submission and Evaluation Procedure



Content of proposal

- research proposal of no more than 2000 words, written in English, French or Dutch, including problem statement, research methodology and expected contribution.
- a letter of motivation of no more than 800 words.
- a CV highlighting the candidate's relevant academic background.
- a declaration of acceptance from the promotor (and the co-promotor, if applicable);
- a copy of the candidate's master's degree and relevant transcripts of records.
- Research Ethical Self-Assessment
- If applicable, a declaration of voluntary participation in reservist training within the Belgian Defence.

As a separate document :

- Budget File
- Gantt Chart

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Submission and Evaluation Procedure



Evaluation Procedure

- Step 1 - General eligibility check
- Evaluation by selection committee Defence
 - Criteria :
 - the originality of the subject,
 - the scientific quality of the proposal,
 - the relevance of the subject to the Belgian Defence,
 - the expected societal impact and
 - the positioning of the project within the university research group and its further development.

Candidates who wish to begin reservist training will receive a plus.

→ Shortlist of max 20 projects



Submission and Evaluation Procedure

Evaluation Procedure



- Step 2 – Selection Committee evaluation, incl. interviews with the applicants (40 minutes per proposal)
 - Ranking of proposals
- Step 3 - Selection proposal formulated by Scientific Committee RHID
 - Proposed ranking
- Step 4 - Final decision by Board of Directors RHID



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Submission and Evaluation Procedure

After selection

- Selection decided by Royal Decree
- Royal Decree and Signature of contract
- First advance payment → follow invoicing instructions of the RHID
- Selected projects start in October 2026
- Kick-off meetings



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FAQ on website

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GOOD LUCK!