

## **RULES AND REGULATIONS**

### **INCENTIVE GRANT FOR SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH (MIS - MANDAT D'IMPULSION SCIENTIFIQUE)**

**ADOPTED BY**

**THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE F.R.S.-FNRS**

**ON 25<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2018**

***Référence : FRS-FNRS\_REGL\_MIS\_EN\_CA20180425\_2018.05.29\_3\_Final***

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## CHAPTER I: SCOPE

### Article 1

The rules and regulations hereinafter are only applicable to the Incentive Grant for Scientific Research (MIS – Mandat d'impulsion scientifique) instrument enabling the funding of research programmes within the framework of the Credits and Projects Call of the Fund for Scientific Research - FNRS<sup>1</sup> (F.R.S.-FNRS).

Instrument	Duration	Characteristics	Co-promoter participation
MIS	2 years	The MIS is intended for an individual researcher.	No

### Article 2

The goal of the funding granted within the framework of the MIS consists in supporting young permanent researchers who seek to develop a scientific unit focusing on a future-oriented area within their university.

The research programme should be characterised by its originality and its innovativeness as well as by its scientific autonomy from the works of the laboratory where the applicant is involved. This programme should eventually enable the researcher to acquire her/his independence in a “flagship” laboratory.

### Article 3

The research programme is meant to be carried out within a university of the French-speaking Community of Belgium (CFB) listed in [Appendix 1](#).

### Article 4

The promoter is the person who assumes the scientific responsibility and is in charge of the administrative management of the funded research programme.

## CHAPTER II: CANDIDACY

### II- A.: THE PROMOTER

#### Article 5

At the latest by 15<sup>th</sup> November of the year when submitting the application the promoter-applicant to a MIS must be:

- Either a Research Associate, a Senior Research Associate or a Research Director of the F.R.S.-FNRS and assuming the function and duties of such position, Senior assistant (Premier assistant) or Head of Works employed on a full-time basis and with a permanent contract in a university of the French-speaking Community of Belgium.
- Or a member of the academic personnel<sup>2</sup> from a university of the French-speaking Community of Belgium and employed on a full-time basis and with a permanent contract.

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<sup>1</sup> The Fund for Scientific Research - FNRS shall be understood as the F.R.S.-FNRS and its Associated Funds.

<sup>2</sup> This includes academic staff members on probation (holding a position equivalent to a permanent appointment).

## Article 6

The promoter-applicant to a MIS must have obtained a Ph.D. after the defence of a thesis and delivered by a university for maximum 12 years. This period of time shall expire on the validation deadline fixed for the academic authorities (rectors) to validate applications, at the latest.

The maximum period of time set in paragraph 1 is extended for one additional year per childbirth and/or adoption occurring after obtaining the academic degree or diploma considered when deciding to award the fellowship.

## Article 7

Applicants may not apply for a MIS more than three times.

Researchers who have already benefited from a MIS can no longer apply for this fellowship.

Applicants who have been already granted with a Ulysse Incentive Grant for Mobility in Scientific Research (MISU) may not apply for a MIS application.

## **II- B.: CUMULATION RULES**

### Article 8

Any promoter must comply with all the cumulation rules as referred to in [Appendix 2](#).

## **II- C.: APPLICATION SUBMISSION**

### Article 9

The Credits and Projects Call is opened once a year and is published on the F.R.S.-FNRS website.

The submission of an application can be made either in French or in English and online only through SEMAPHORE, the management platform of the calls for proposals, available at the following address: <https://applications.frs-fnrs.be>. It is recommended to applicants who wish to have their application file assessed by [Scientific Commissions](#) dedicated to SEN (Exact and Natural Sciences) and SVS (Health and Life Sciences) domains to submit their application in English<sup>3</sup>.

All MIS applications are submitted to a procedure including two successive electronic validations on the dates that will be indicated when the call for applications is published on the F.R.S.-FNRS website:

- a. The validation by the promoter: It accounts as a confirmation that the application file is complete.
- b. The validation by the research unit (or Board of Education) of the university of the French-speaking Community of Belgium, the Authority to which the application file is transferred following the validation by the promoter. This Authority may accept or refuse the application. The validation deadline fixed for the rectors puts a final end to the call for applications.

Applications that have not been validated within the time-frame of the call cannot be taken into account.

The validation dates are available in the mini-guide.

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<sup>3</sup> Should the application file be submitted in French, the F.R.S.-FNRS may require the applicant to provide a translation in English for the purpose of conducting [the ex-ante evaluation](#).

## Article 10

The following documents must be attached to the MIS electronic application form:

- A letter of support from the Rector of the university of the French-speaking Community of Belgium;
- The contact details of 3 recognised foreign experts<sup>4</sup> who have no recent collaboration with the applicant. The F.R.S.-FNRS shall contact them to require a letter of recommendation (reference letter).

## **CHAPTER III: NATURE AND DURATION OF THE FELLOWSHIP**

### **III- A.: ELIGIBLE AND NON ELIGIBLE EXPENSES**

#### Article 11

As part of the MIS the allocated fund can cover 3 types of expenses:

- Personnel
- Operating
- Equipment

#### Article 12

Some expenses are capped:

- MRI at € 150/hour
- MEG at € 300/hour

#### Article 13

The following operating costs are not authorised:

- Payment and reimbursement of rents
- Payment of the heating, light and telephone
- Costs for facilities maintenance and building costs
- Costs for equipment maintenance and repairing
- Costs for furniture
- Office supply costs (except for justified computer costs)
- Restaurant costs and expenses for foodstuffs (coffee, sugar, softs...)
- Visa fees for residence permits
- Insurance for appliance(s) or vehicle(s) belonging to the institution
- Thesis related expenses (printout, jury's invitation)

### **III- B.: FUNDING CHARACTERISTICS AND PROVISIONS**

#### Article 14

The MIS is applicable for 2 years.

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<sup>4</sup> Applicants shall contact the reference persons prior to mentioning their contact details in the application form if they want to make sure that their referees are willing to provide a reference letter as part of their application. After submission of the application file, the F.R.S.-FNRS will contact the reference persons referred in the application form and a reminder will be sent to each referee in due course. No information will be communicated to the applicant on the receipt of the letters to ensure confidentiality.

However, a third year will be accepted automatically and with no interruption with the MIS granted if the promoter of a MIS has applied for an ERC Grant and has been interviewed by the jury in the meantime, but has not been granted the ERC Grant further to the second-step evaluation.

The starting date of the MIS is set for the 1<sup>st</sup> January and the ending date for the 31<sup>st</sup> December.

#### Article 15

A MIS application enables to apply for funding of maximum € 150,000-, **on an annual average**.

The grants obtained by the promoter of a MIS are personal and shall not be transferable.

#### Article 16

Categories of personnel are detailed in the table below <sup>5</sup>:

Categories	Activity	
	Part time	Full time
Doctoral Researcher – grant scheme	n/a	x
Postdoctoral Researcher <sup>6</sup> – salary scheme	x	x
Technician – salary scheme (capped)	x	x
Short-term Postdoctoral Researcher – grant scheme (capped)	n/a	x

n/a = not applicable

The promoter of a MIS is allowed to recruit personnel **for minimum one month** and the duration may not exceed the maximal duration of the funding agreement.

The identity of the personnel is not required when submitting an application, however, the category of the personnel must be specified (see table above). Curricula vitae are not provided to the members of the Scientific Commissions.

On the date they are hired Doctoral Researchers must have obtained one of the following degrees for maximum 3 years (for no more than the duration of the specialisation for doctors and veterinarian applicants who have been undertaking a medical or veterinary specialty training):

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<sup>5</sup> For all categories (Doctoral Researcher, Technician, Short-term Postdoctoral Researcher), the promoter shall contact the relevant department of her/his university to obtain an estimate of the total personnel costs involved based on the scientific seniority.

**Amounts cannot be changed after application submission.**

Technician and Short-term Postdoctoral Researcher categories are limited to an annual amount, calculated in proportion to the services provided. Limitations in force for the first year of funding are detailed in the Credits and Projects Call mini-guide.

<sup>6</sup> Since the F.R.S.-FNRS is the employer of the Postdoctoral Researcher, the promoter shall take into account the annual cost provided in the Credits and Projects Call mini-guide.

- 1° a master degree for a value of at least 120 credits awarded by a Higher Education Institution within the French-speaking Community of Belgium;
- 2° a master degree for a value of at least 120 credits awarded by a Higher Education Institution within the Dutch-speaking Community, German-speaking Community or from the Royal Military Academy;
- 3° another degree as referred to in Article 115 of the French-speaking Community of Belgium Decree of 7<sup>th</sup> November 2013 that defines the landscape of Higher Education and the academic studies organisation.

Postdoctoral Researchers must have obtained a doctoral academic degree after the defence of a thesis for maximum 5 years.

The maximum period of time mentioned above is extended for one additional year per childbirth and/or adoption occurring after obtaining the academic degree or diploma considered when deciding to offer the position.

Specific rules and regulations govern the [Short-term Postdoctoral Researcher](#) Fellowship (CTP - Chercheur temporaire postdoctoral).

#### Article 17

No compensation can be granted to the promoter of a MIS.

## CHAPTER IV: APPLICATIONS EXAMINATION

#### Article 18

Criteria that will be taken into account for the evaluation of the applications are the following:

CRITERIA
Quality of the promoter: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ CV and publications</li> <li>➤ International recognition</li> <li>➤ Main research achievements</li> </ul>
Quality of the research programme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Feasibility</li> <li>➤ Methodology and relevance</li> <li>➤ Originality</li> <li>➤ Collaborations</li> </ul>

The adequacy of the requested budget with regard to the submitted research programme will also be evaluated. The Scientific Commission may reduce the requested budget up to a maximum of 15%. If the adequacy between the research programme and the requested budget is not justified and appears to require a reduction of more than 15%, the research programme will not be deemed fundable.

#### Article 19

In addition to the criteria as referred to in Article 18, the following criteria will also be taken into account as part of the MIS:

- originality and novelty of the project,

- possibility to launch a new research unit,
- scientific autonomy with respect to any existing research unit or laboratory,
- future-oriented theme (development prospects of the field of study),
- 3 recommendations from foreign experts.

#### Article 20

The Board of Trustees of the F.R.S.-FNRS allocates funds according to the budget that is available. It decides on the granting or rejection, and where provided for, on the amounts to be granted.

## CHAPTER V: FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

#### Article 21

Funding granted through the MIS instrument is subject to a research agreement.

This agreement shall bear the signature of the following parties:

- **the promoter** commits to carrying out the funded research;
- **the F.R.S.-FNRS** commits to allocating grants covering the personnel, operating and equipment costs, each year covered by the agreement. No transfer between those 3 expense items may be accepted;
- **the hosting academic institution.**

The agreement provides for unilateral termination clauses, which must include a period of notice.

#### Article 22

The grants at the disposal of the promoters are managed by the financial department of the institution, to which they are attached.

The financial department of the institution shall send the supporting documents to the F.R.S.-FNRS as soon as possible.

For the personnel costs relevant to a given calendar year, the supporting documents must be sent before the 1<sup>st</sup> March of the following year.

For operating and/or equipment costs, the supporting documents must be sent at the latest 14 months after the end of the agreement, that is to say on the 1<sup>st</sup> March of the year in question.

#### Article 23

No hiring is effective without the prior written approval of the F.R.S.-FNRS.

The replacement of staff among the Doctoral researcher category is not authorised during the last 6 months of the research agreement.

The personnel recruitment which was expected although not effective on the starting date of the agreement may be delayed. However, postponement shall be equivalent to the lost employment duration and not exceed a six-month period after the end of the agreement nor the employment duration initially allotted.

#### Article 24

Scientific and technical personnel recruitment shall be done in accordance with the scales and regulations in force:



- within the hosting academic institution, as far as the doctoral scientific and technical staff and the Short-term Postdoctoral Researcher are concerned;
- within the F.R.S.-FNRS as far as the Postdoctoral Researcher (referred to as "Scientific Collaborator") is concerned.

As for technical staff and the Short-term Postdoctoral Researcher Fellowship, the F.R.S.-FNRS contribution is limited to an annual amount assigned from the Fund and is a pro-rata calculation based on the services provided.

#### Article 25

The F.R.S.-FNRS shall reimburse personnel costs up to the total amounts indicated in the research agreement, while observing the Personnel categories.

Concerning Personnel categories there is some flexibility in terms of annual costs and duration, should the granting duration and maximum amount not be exceeded. Also for categories which are annually capped, this annual limitation shall not be exceeded, on the understanding that employment may not exceed the ending date of the agreement, in case the recruitment has been postponed as provided for in article 23 § 3.

The financial participation of the F.R.S.-FNRS is limited to the global amount indicated in the agreement.

## **CHAPTER VI: MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS**

#### Article 26

Any device acquired with a credit from the F.R.S.-FNRS becomes the property of the hosting academic institution to which the beneficiary of the credit is attached.

The purchase of any device must be done with due respect for the provisions defined by the relevant department of the hosting academic institution.

This institution commits, however, to putting the mentioned device at the disposal of the researchers involved for the time needed in order to conduct the research, which led to its purchase in the first place. In addition, the hosting academic institution commits not to alienating or lending the equipment without the prior written approval of the F.R.S.-FNRS.

In the event that the device was purchased with the provision of an additional funding, the Board of Trustees of the F.R.S.-FNRS will settle the ownership issue with the competent authorities.

#### Article 27

Any change made to the planned expenditures must receive the prior written approval of the F.R.S.-FNRS.

The grants destined for the personnel are available only for the duration of the research agreement, which may be extended for maximum 6 months in case of postponement of personnel recruitment expected although not effective on the starting date of the agreement, and are divided according to the provisions of the agreement.

The grants destined for operating and equipment costs can be used for the duration of the agreement, with an additional 12-month period.

The remaining amount will be recovered by the F.R.S.-FNRS.

#### Article 28

Grants are exclusively allocated for the execution of the research programme approved by the F.R.S.-FNRS. The promoter is required to use them solely for that purpose. Any fundamental change in the ongoing research programme must obtain the prior written approval of the F.R.S.-FNRS.

## **CHAPTER VII: RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF THE PROMOTER**

#### Article 29

Any funded research programme must comply with the legal provisions in force regarding ethics.

#### Article 30

Promoters must submit to the rules imposed by the academic authority of the hosting academic institution where they work and observe its regulations. In addition, regarding the F.R.S.-FNRS, they must adhere to the regulation on property, protection and promotion of the results from the research carried out within the institution.

#### Article 31

Three months after the end of the research agreement, a request for a final report is sent to the promoter.

The promoter must send this final report to the F.R.S.-FNRS within two months following the request.

#### Article 32

Pursuant to the [Regulation](#) on the application of the Open Access policy to scientific publications resulting from research programmes supported by the F.R.S.-FNRS and its Associated Funds, any scientific publication resulting partially or fully from the funding of the MIS instrument shall mention the source of this funding as follows:

*"This work was supported by the Fonds de la Recherche Scientifique-FNRS under Grant(s) n° [agreement number]"*.

## **APPENDIX 1**

Relevant institutions giving access to the funding of the F.R.S.-FNRS

MIS Instrument

Credits and Projects Call

**Instrument Mandat d'impulsion scientifique / Incentive Grant for Scientific Research**

(MIS)

<p><b>Candidat promoteur d'une université CFB / Promoter-applicant of a CFB university</b></p>	<p>➤ <b>Universités de la Communauté française de Belgique (CFB) Universities of the French-speaking Community of Belgium (CFB)</b></p> <p>Université Catholique de Louvain (UCL) Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB) Université de Liège (ULiège) Université de Mons (UMons) Université de Namur (UNamur) Université Saint-Louis - Bruxelles (USL-B)</p>
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## **APPENDIX 2**

Cumulation Rules

CDR/EQP/PDR/MIS/MISU Instruments

Every promoter who takes part in a call must comply with all the cumulation rules as detailed below.

### **Rule 1**

The number of applications that can be submitted within a call as a co-promoter is limited to a single application for the Cross-university PDR instrument.

### **Rule 2**

The number of applications that can be submitted within a call as a co-promoter is limited to a single application for the Single or Cross-university EQP<sup>7</sup> instrument.

### **Rule 3**

A **main promoter-applicant** who has no ongoing research agreement may apply for one of the following as part of a call:

- 1 CDR,
- 1 PDR<sup>8</sup>,
- 1 EQP,
- 1 MIS,
- 1 EQP + CDR,
- 1 EQP + 1 PDR,
- 1 MIS + 1 CDR<sup>9</sup> on the condition that the research programme or study is genuinely different from the aim of the MIS.

### **Rule 4**

**Promoters in charge of an ongoing CDR** may apply for a new CDR application as from the second year of funding.

Promoters in charge of an ongoing CDR may apply for one of the following as part of a call:

Within the first year of funding:

- 1 PDR,
- 1 EQP,
- 1 MIS,
- 1 EQP + PDR,

Within the second year of funding:

- 1 CDR
- 1 PDR
- 1 EQP
- 1 MIS
- 1 EQP + 1 CDR,

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<sup>7</sup> Single and Cross-university EQP instrument is further shortened to EQP, so that the document is easier to read.

<sup>8</sup> Single and Cross-university PDR instrument is further shortened to PDR, so that the document is easier to read.

<sup>9</sup> If the MIS is granted, the CDR will not be funded.

- 1 EQP + 1 PDR
- 1 MIS + 1 CDR<sup>10</sup> on the condition that the research programme or study is genuinely different from the aim of the MIS.

### **Rule 5**

**Main promoters and any co-promoters in charge of an ongoing EQP** may apply for a new EQP application as from the second year of funding.

Main promoters and any co-promoters in charge of an ongoing EQP may apply for one of the following applications as part of a call:

Within the first year of funding:

- 1 CDR,
- 1 PDR,
- 1 MIS,
- 1 MIS + 1 CDR<sup>10</sup> on the condition that the research programme or study is genuinely different from the aim of the MIS.

Within the second year of funding:

- 1 CDR,
- 1 PDR,
- 1 EQP,
- 1 MIS,
- 1 EQP + CDR,
- 1 EQP + 1 PDR,
- 1 MIS + 1 CDR<sup>10</sup> on the condition that the research programme or study is genuinely different from the aim of the MIS.

### **Rule 6**

**Main promoters in charge of an ongoing PDR** may apply for one of the following as part of a call:

- 1 CDR,
- 1 PDR, on condition that the shortest overlap between both PDR is taken into account, with regard to each call schedule and starting date of PDR;
- 1 EQP,
- 1 MIS on condition that the shortest overlap between the PDR and the MIS is taken into account, with regard to each call schedule and starting date of the PDR and the MIS;
- 1 EQP + 1 CDR,
- 1 EQP + 1 PDR on condition that the shortest overlap between both PDR is taken into account, with regard to each call schedule and starting date of PDR;
- 1 MIS + 1 CDR<sup>10</sup> on the condition that the research programme or study is genuinely different from the aim of the MIS and on condition that the shortest overlap between the PDR and the MIS is taken into account, with regard to each call schedule and starting date of the PDR and the MIS.

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<sup>10</sup>If the MIS is granted, the CDR will not be funded.

### **Rule 7**

**The promoter of a MIS** whose start has been postponed may not submit any PDR application before the effective starting date of the MIS.

### **Rule 8**

**Promoters in charge of an ongoing MIS**<sup>11</sup> may apply for one of the following applications as part of a call:

Within the first year of funding:

- 1 CDR on the condition that the research programme or study is genuinely different from the aim of the MIS,
- 1 PDR on condition that the shortest overlap between the PDR and the MIS is taken into account, with regard to each call schedule and starting date of the PDR and the MIS,
- 1 EQP,
- 1 EQP + 1 CDR on the condition that the research programme or the study is genuinely different from the aim of the MIS,
- 1 EQP + 1 PDR on condition that the shortest overlap between the PDR and the MIS is taken into account, with regard to each call schedule and starting date of the PDR and the MIS.

Within the second year of funding:

- 1 CDR,
- 1 PDR on condition that the shortest overlap between the PDR and the MIS is taken into account, with regard to each call schedule and starting date of the PDR and the MIS,
- 1 EQP,
- 1 EQP + 1 CDR,
- 1 EQP + 1 PDR on condition that the shortest overlap between the PDR and the MIS is taken into account, with regard to each call schedule and starting date of the PDR and the MIS.

### **Rule 9**

**Promoters in charge of an ongoing MISU** (Ulysse Incentive Grant for Mobility in Scientific Research) may apply for one of the following as part of a call:

Within the first year of funding:

- 1 CDR on the condition that the research programme or study is genuinely different from the aim of the MISU,
- 1 EQP,
- 1 EQP + 1 CDR on the condition that the research programme or study is genuinely different from the aim of the MISU.

Within the second year of funding:

- 1 CDR on the condition that the research programme or study is genuinely different from the aim of the MISU,

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<sup>11</sup>*Promoters of an ongoing MIS, who have been granted a third year automatically following the submission of an ERC Grant application with no success after being interviewed by the juries and further to the second-step evaluation, should respect the cumulation rules which apply to promoters of a MIS in their second year of funding.*



- 1 PDR on condition that the shortest overlap between the PDR and the MISU is taken into account, with regard to each call schedule and starting date of the PDR and the MISU,
- 1 EQP,
- 1 EQP + 1 CDR on the condition that the research programme or study is genuinely different from the aim of the MISU,
- 1 EQP + 1 PDR on condition that the shortest overlap between the PDR and the MISU is taken into account, with regard to each call schedule and starting date of the PDR and the MISU.

Within the third year of funding:

- 1 CDR,
- 1 PDR on condition that the shortest overlap between the PDR and the MISU is taken into account, with regard to each call schedule and starting date of the PDR and the MISU,
- 1 EQP,
- 1 EQP + 1 CDR,
- 1 EQP + 1 PDR on condition that the shortest overlap between the PDR and the MISU is taken into account, with regard to each call schedule and starting date of the PDR and the MISU.