

RULES AND REGULATIONS

RESEARCH PROJECT (PDR - PROJET DE RECHERCHE)

ADOPTED BY

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

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CHAPTER I: SCOPE

Article 1

The rules and regulations hereinafter are only applicable to the Research Project (PDR) instrument enabling the funding of research programmes within the framework of the Credits and Projects Call of the Fund for Scientific Research - FNRS¹ (F.R.S.-FNRS).

Instrument	Duration	Characteristics	Co-promoter participation
PDR ²	2 years or 4 years	Single-university PDR	No
		Cross-university PDR	Yes <u>but</u> 1 maximum per institution. The co-promoter must be from another institution than the main promoter

Article 2

The research programme may be conducted in one or several institutions listed in [Appendix 1](#).

Article 3

The main 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.: PROMOTERS

Article 4

At the latest by 15th November of the year when submitting the application the main promoter-applicant of a PDR 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.
- Or a researcher permanently appointed or on probation, but holding a position equivalent to a permanent appointment in a university of the French-speaking community of Belgium (CFB) listed in [Appendix 1](#).

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

² Following the conclusion of a "Lead Agency Procedure (LAP)" collaboration agreement with the [National Research Fund of Luxembourg \(FNR\)](#), the [F.R.S.-FNRS](#) provides the opportunity to submit collaborative project proposals, as part of the PDR instrument within the framework of the F.R.S.-FNRS Credits and Projects Call 2018, with research institutions established within Luxembourg and eligible for the FNR Luxembourg. Luxembourg partners must comply with the [INTER programme](#) guidelines from the FNR.

If the main promoter-applicant who is appointed permanently and accesses pension / becomes professor emeritus after the validation deadline fixed for the academic authorities (rectors) and before the end of the funding scheme in case of granting, the submission of the application shall be subject to the prior approval of the Head of institution where the research will be carried out.

The main promoter-applicant permanently appointed who will access pension / become professor emeritus by the validation deadline fixed for the academic authorities (rectors) is not eligible.

Article 5

The **Cross-university PDR** provides for the participation of one co-promoter-applicant per institution, provided that they are not from the main promoter's institution.

Any co-promoter applicant involved in a **Cross-university PDR** shall meet the eligibility criteria as referred to in article 4.

II- B.: CUMULATION RULES

Article 6

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

II- C.: APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Article 7

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 dedicated to 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 English³.

All PDR applications are submitted to a procedure including two or three successive electronic validations on the dates that will be indicated when the call for applications is published.

- a. The validation by the main promoter, responsible proponent accountable to the F.R.S.-FNRS administration: it accounts as a confirmation that the application is complete.
- b. The validation by co-promoters (if any, and for Cross-university PDR only): it accounts as an electronic signature.
- c. The validation by the research unit (or Board of Education) of the institution to which promoters are related – the Authority to which the application file is transferred once promoters have validated the application form. That authority may accept or refuse the application. The validation deadline fixed for the rectors puts a final end to the call for proposals.

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

³ 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](#).

The validation dates are available in the mini-guide.

CHAPTER III: NATURE AND DURATION OF THE FUNDING

III- A.: ELIGIBLE AND NON-ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Article 8

As part of the PDR the allocated fund can cover 4 types of expenses:

- Personnel
- Operating
- Support operating
- Equipment

Article 9

Support operating costs are limited to € 5,000- **on an annual average** for the duration of the project for each institution involved in the research programme and are allowed for the following expenses:

- Creating a book
- Creating a dictionary
- Purchasing a book
- Encoding
- Software licence rental
- Registration for a congress
- Computer
- Scan
- Travel expenses

Article 10

Some expenses are capped:

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

Article 11

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 12

The starting date of the PDR is set for the 1st January and the ending date for the 31st December.

Article 13

A **Single-university PDR** application enables to apply for funding ranging from:

- € 30,000- to € 80,000-, **on an annual average**.

Personnel costs (non mandatory) amount to:

- 1 full-time equivalent (FTE) **maximum**, on an annual average for the duration of the project.

Concerning Single-university PDR (€ 80,000- maximum limit on an annual average):

- Personnel costs are limited to a maximum of € 50,000-, on an annual average for the duration of the project (to be justified in the application file), and,
- Operating, Support operating and Equipment costs are limited to € 30,000- **on an annual average** for the duration of the project. This limit can be extended up to a maximum of € 60,000- **on an annual average** for the duration of the project in case there is no request for Personnel in the PDR.

A **Cross-university PDR** application enables to apply for funding ranging from:

- € 30,000- to € 115,000-, **on an annual average**.

Personnel costs (non mandatory) amount to:

- 2 full-time equivalent (FTE) **maximum**, on an annual average for the duration of the project.

Concerning Cross-university PDR (€ 115,000- maximum limit on an annual average):

- Personnel costs are limited to a maximum of € 100,000-, **on an annual average** for the duration of the project (to be justified in the application file), and,
- Operating, Support operating and Equipment costs are limited to € 15,000- **on an annual average** for the duration of the project. This limit can be extended up to a maximum of € 60,000- **on an annual average** for the duration of the project in case Personnel costs are minimised. (Requirement: the maximum limit of € 115,000- on an annual average for the duration of the project must be adhered).

Support operating costs (detailed in Article 9) are included in the budgetary limitation of the Single or Cross-university PDR and the maximum amount is of:

- € 5,000- **on an annual average** for the duration of the project, and per institution involved in the funding application.

Article 14

Categories of personnel⁴ are detailed in the table below:

⁴ For all categories, 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 and Veterinary M.D. Ph.D Specialist categories are limited to an annual amount, calculated in proportion to the worked days. Limitations in force for the first year of funding are detailed in the Credits and Projects Call mini-guide.

Categories	Activity	
	Part time	Full time
Doctoral Researcher – grant scheme	n/a	x
Doctoral / Non-doctoral Researcher – salary scheme	x	x
Postdoctoral Researcher – salary scheme	x	x
Technician–salary scheme (capped)	x	x
Short-term Postdoctoral Researcher – grant scheme (capped)	n/a	x
Veterinary MD. Ph.D. Specialist – salary scheme (capped)	x	n/a

n/a = not applicable

Promoters are 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 a PDR application; however, the personnel category must be specified (see table above). Curricula vitae are not provided to the members of the Scientific Commissions.

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

- 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 7th November 2013 that defines the landscape of Higher Education and the academic studies organisation.

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

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 fellowships for:

- [Short-term Postdoctoral Researcher](#) (CTP - Chercheur temporaire postdoctoral),
- [Veterinary M.D. Ph.D Specialist](#) (VETE-CCS - Vétérinaire clinicien-chercheur spécialiste).

Article 15

Teams' personnel whose remuneration costs are not charged to the PDR may include amongst others:

- Members of the teaching, scientific, administrative or technical staff from the French-speaking community of Belgium universities,
- Members who benefit from a grant allocated by a Belgian or a foreign body promoting research.

No compensation can be granted to the promoters or to the above-mentioned personnel.

CHAPTER IV: APPLICATIONS EXAMINATION

Article 16

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

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

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 17

The decision-making body 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 18

Funding granted through the PDR 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 host institution.**

In the particular case of joint research carried out by several promoters in several host universities, each institution takes part in the agreement, which contains all the relevant provisions regarding the personnel recruitment, the management of grants and the equipment ownership.

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

Article 19

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 1st 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 research agreement, i.e., before 1st March of the year in question.

Article 20

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 21

Scientific and technical personnel recruitment shall be in accordance with the scales and regulations in force within the host institution.

As for technical staff, Short-term Postdoctoral Researchers and Veterinary M.D. Ph.D. Specialist Fellowships, 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 22

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 20 § 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 23

Any device acquired with a credit from the F.R.S.-FNRS becomes the property of the host 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 host 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 host 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 24

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 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 25

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

CHAPTER VII: RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF THE PROMOTER

Article 26

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

Article 27

Promoters must submit to the rules imposed by the academic authority of the host 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 28

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 granted as part of the PDR 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]”.

CHAPTER VIII: EX-POST INDICATORS

Article 29

The F.R.S.-FNRS collects ex-post quantitative indicators related to the funding of the PDR granted (e.g., number of publications, patents, dissertation and theses) as well as the publications list.

The main promoter shall communicate those data to the F.R.S.-FNRS on the E-Space platform (<https://e-space.frs-fnrs.be>).

APPENDIX 1

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

PDR Instrument

Credits and Projects Call

Institutions de rattachement / Attached institutions

Instrument Projet de recherche / Research project

(SINGLE-UNIVERSITY PDR)

<p>Candidat promoteur d'une université CFB / Promoter-applicant of a CFB university</p>	<p>➤ Universités de la Communauté française de Belgique (CFB) Universities of the French-speaking Community of Belgium (CFB)</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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<p>Candidat promoteur principal et candidat co-promoteur d'une université CFB / Main promoter-applicant and co-promoter-applicant of a CFB university</p>	<p>➤ Universités de la Communauté française de Belgique (CFB) Universities of the French-speaking Community of Belgium (CFB)</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>
<p>Candidat co-promoteur (de régime linguistique francophone) attaché à l'une des institutions / French speaking co-promoter-applicant attached to one of these institutions</p>	<p>➤ Ecole royale militaire (E.R.M.)</p> <p>➤ Etablissements scientifiques fédéraux State Scientific Institutions</p> <p>Archives de l'Etat (AE) Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique (B.R.B.) Institut d'Aéronomie spatiale de Belgique (I.A.S.) Institut royal météorologique de Belgique (I.R.M.) Institut royal du Patrimoine artistique (I.R.P.A.) Institut royal des Sciences naturelles de Belgique (I.R.S.N.B.) Musée royal de l'Afrique centrale (M.R.A.C.) Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire (M.R.A.H.) Musées royaux des Beaux-arts de Belgique (M.R.B.A.B.) Observatoire royal de Belgique (O.R.B.)</p> <p>➤ Centre d'Étude de l'énergie Nucléaire (SCK-CEN)</p> <p>➤ Centre wallon de Recherches agronomiques (CRA-W)</p> <p>➤ Institut de Recherches Microbiologiques Jean-Marie Wiame (I.R.M.W.)</p> <p>➤ Jardin Botanique de Meise (J.B.M.)</p> <p>➤ Musée royal de Mariemont</p> <p>➤ Sciensano</p>

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 EQP⁵ 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 PDR⁶,
- 1 EQP,
- 1 MIS,
- 1 EQP + CDR,
- 1 EQP + 1 PDR,
- 1 MIS + 1 CDR⁷ 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,

⁵ Single and Cross-university EQP instrument is further shortened to EQP, so that the document is easier to read.

⁶ Single and Cross-university PDR instrument is further shortened to PDR, so that the document is easier to read.

⁷ If the MIS is granted, the CDR will not be funded.

- 1 EQP + 1 PDR
- 1 MIS + 1 CDR⁸ 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 CDR⁸ 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 CDR⁸ 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 CDR⁸ 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.

⁸ 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 MIS⁹ 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,
- 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,

⁹ 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 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.