

SPECIAL CALL CORONAVIRUS : « Crédits Urgents de Recherche »

April 2nd 2020

1. CONTEXT

A better understanding of the current Coronavirus epidemic requires urgent scientific research.

As a reference agency for research funding, the FNRS has the responsibility to respond and release funds to organize calls to mobilize the FWB's scientific communities and help them contribute to the growing international efforts.

The CUR (Crédit Urgent de Recherche) is one of the new funding instruments specifically designed to meet these needs.

2. ELIGIBILITY

The Promoter must be :

- a Qualified Researcher, Senior Research Fellow or Research Director of the F.R.S.-FNRS
- or
- an academic or a scientist appointed on a permanent or probationary basis within one of the 6 FWB universities

The project may be carried out in collaboration or within a university hospital provided that the promoter meets the eligibility conditions. Only one application is authorized per promoter.

3. GENERAL FORMAT

Teams that have already started research on the coronavirus or are about to do so can submit a claim (limited to 60 k€) for costs incurred for the period 1 April - 31 August 2020.

An online form is available (<https://e-space.frs-fnrs.be>)¹, where they are asked to provide :

- basic administrative data;
- 5 publications of their choice (the most relevant to the project or the most representative of the scientific career)
- a summary of the research project in progress or to be started;
- a description of the expected impacts;
- a brief description of the proposed expenditures;
- a statement regarding the researcher's ethical obligations.

Eligible costs are operating costs (reagents, consumables, analyses, subjects for clinical/epidemiological studies, samples including their transport and/or conditioning costs, etc.), small equipment or contribution to staff costs (technician, research nurse, etc.).

The call will be open until May 1st 2020.

¹ You will have to use your usual login and password. If not yet registered, you can create an account, which should take less than a minute.

Thereafter, beneficiaries will be required to send:

1. By 31 December 2020 at the latest: supporting documents for the expenditure for which the credit is requested. Reimbursement will be effective only after receipt of the positive opinion by the Ethics Committee.
2. By 15 September 2020 at the latest: a brief summary of the results obtained.

4. EVALUATION

The evaluation will be carried out by a group of international experts who are members of the FNRS scientific commissions.

The evaluation criteria will be: a) The quality of the PI/team; b) The quality of the proposed research; c) The potential impact of the project in relation to the current crisis; d) The adequacy between the project and the funding requested.

Funding decisions should be taken by 5th of June 2020 at the latest by the FNRS Board (patrimoine).

5. ELIGIBLE RESEARCH TOPICS

The following themes, included in the priorities set by the WHO, are eligible:

Epidemiological and translational studies

- Natural history of the disease (including anthropogenic factors) and the mode of transmission of the virus
- Diagnosis of infection, asymptomatic carrier, evolution of immune response
- Clinical characterization and management
- Predictive and retrospective numerical models

Physiopathogenesis of the disease (virus-host interactions and immune response)

- Development of animal and cellular models
- Therapeutic targets and evaluation models for drug candidates (not including vaccines)

Infection prevention and control measures in the health care setting (including the best ways to protect health workers) and in community settings

- Vulnerability and resilience of individuals, collectives and organizations
- Conditions of efficiency and actual conditions for implementing information, prevention, care and control measures
- Assessment and modelling of the epidemiological, economic and financial impact of the epidemic and of prevention and control measures

Projects aiming at the development of tests in **clinical biology/screening** are also eligible.

6. ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

If you have any questions about CUR projects: please contact Mr. Arnaud Goolaerts, Director of Research Administration at the FNRS (arnaud.goolaerts@frs-fnrs.be).

In case of technical question(s) concerning the filing of an application: please contact the e-space team (e-space@frs-fnrs.be). Please mention "CUR" in the subject of your e-mail so that it can be treated as a priority.