

French version: [click here](#)

FRESH Rules and Regulations: [click here](#)

1. FRESH: A FUND DEDICATED TO HUMAN SCIENCES RESEARCH

The Government of the French-speaking Community of Belgium created the Human Sciences Research Fund (FRESH – Fonds pour la Recherche en Sciences Humaines). The aim of this Fund is to meet the different and complementary needs of the **fundamental research in social and human sciences**.

The F.R.S.-FNRS Board of Trustees has decided to restrict the call for doctorate grants (term: 2+2 years).

2. SCHEDULE

Opening of the call: Thursday 2nd July 2026 on [e-space](#) for the online submission.

INSTRUMENTS		FRESH CALL 2026		
		ELECTRONIC VALIDATION DEADLINES ¹ ON E-SPACE		
		APPLICANT	PROMOTER	RECTOR
1 st Grant	FRESH-B1	Tuesday 25 th August at 2 p.m.*	Tuesday 1 st September at 2 p.m.	Monday 7 th September at 2 p.m.
2 nd Grant	FRESH-B2			

*Please note that this is a **fixed deadline** and the applicant will not be able to edit, save or submit the application once this deadline has passed. Please make sure that it is submitted on time.

- The F.R.S.-FNRS will give researchers who may be granted with a fellowship renewal (FRESH-B2) access to the electronic form via the [e-space](#) application.
- Applicants pre-selected for a 1st FRESH grant will pass an oral examination between 9th and 16th November 2026 that **must take place at the F.R.S.-FNRS premises** located at "rue d'Egmont 5" (5, Egmont street) 1000 Brussels (Belgium).

However, in exceptional cases, applicants who are unable to attend are requested to duly justify their situation by email to auditions-jurys@frs-fnrs.be as soon as possible. The emails will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the Bureau of the F.R.S.-FNRS Board of Trustees or the Secretary-General of F.R.S.-FNRS.

Jurys dates are available [here](#).

The precise time and date of the oral examination, as well as the practical details, will be communicated in October, right after the jury preselection meeting.

- The decision to allocate the grants will be made by the FRESH Board of Trustees in December.

¹ All times are Brussels local time.

3. APPENDICES

3.1 For each instrument, appendices must be enclosed with the application. For further information, click on the relevant instrument below:

1 ST GRANT	FRESH-B1
2 ND GRANT	FRESH-B2

3.2 Deadlines for providing appendices

DEADLINES IN 2026		DOCUMENTS
1 ST GRANT	Tuesday 1 st September at 2 p.m.	Opinion letter from the promoter, structured according to the template
	Wednesday 30 th September	Appendices (see point 3.1) ²
		Opinion letters from: - 1 reference person (different from the promoter) member of the academic staff of a scientific institution, structured according to the template , - 1 reference person involved in the field outside the academic sphere. They will be contacted by the F.R.S.-FNRS after the promoter's validation.
		Ranking ² completed by the faculty(ies) awarding undergraduate and master (or equivalent) degrees
	Publications accepted after the applicant validation deadline ²	
2 ND GRANT	Saturday 31 st October	Advisory recommendation from the Supervisory Panel (Thesis Advisory Committee)

4. CHANGES COMPARED TO CALL 2025

4.1 Changes in the themes of the “Cultural Challenges” jury (DC)

The FRESH Board of Trustees on 9th April 2026 decided to restructure the themes of the “Cultural Challenges” jury into seven categories, instead of the current eight, without affecting the jury's overall scope, in the interests of clarity. These themes are: Cultural Anthropology / Architecture / Arts and Cultural Studies (including the Performing Arts); Art History / History, Archaeology / Linguistics / Literature / Philosophy.

4.2 Modification of the “scientific section” template

The scientific section has been split into several separate files in order to better structure the information expected and to facilitate its review.

² Where applicable, to be uploaded or mentioned by the applicant on a dedicated page at <https://e-space.frs-fnrs.be>, as a follow-up of their application file after the validation deadline set for the applicant.

4.3 Measures to limit the number of applications

The FRESH Board of Trustees in December 2025 adopted the following decisions:

- **As of the 2026 call**, any application withdrawn after the deadline for validation by the academic authorities (rectors) and before the jury preselection meeting will be recognized.
- As part of the ex-ante evaluation procedure, the juries, meeting in session, establish a consolidated ranking of the applicants. It has been decided that applicants whose application to a FRESH call has not been ranked within the 70% of the best applications during the preselection phase by the jury are not allowed to apply to the following FRESH call. This measure will enter into force **as of the 2026 call**.

4.4 Eligibility criteria related to seniority for researchers becoming long-term foster parents

The F.R.S.-FNRS Board of Trustees in December 2025 decided to extend by 12 months the maximum period used to calculate eligibility based on the required academic seniority for applicants who have taken in one or more children at the same time as long-term foster parents, designated as such by the court, by a placement service accredited by the competent Community, or by a Community service responsible for youth protection (Youth Welfare Services, Committee for Special Youth Assistance) in the context of a long-term placement.

4.5 Eligibility of the holders of FED-tWIN mandate³

The F.R.S.-FNRS Board of Trustees on 9th April 2026 decided to make the holders of FED-tWIN mandate eligible to be promoter of an applicant to a FRESH Grant⁴.

5. SPECIFIC REMARKS

5.1 Grants Renewal

Applications for a Second FRESH Grant will be evaluated by the Supervisory Panel (Thesis Advisory Committee). Second Grant starts as from 1st January 2027.

5.2 Only one FRIA/FRESH application

Applicants are not allowed to apply for both [FRIA](#) and [FRESH](#) instruments in the same year.

5.3 Start date of 1st grants

The FRESH 1st Grant starts on 1st October 2026. The starting date may be postponed upon a duly justified request in the application form.

If the FRESH accepts a starting date for a grant after 1st October 2026, the grant will be postponed by the number of months between 1st October 2026 and the actual starting date of the grant, up to a maximum of 4 months (which means an actual starting date of no later than 31st January 2027). No extension will be granted if the starting date of the grant is later than 1st February 2027.

³ https://www.belspo.be/belspo/research/FEDtWIN_en.stm

⁴ Excluding instruments Research Associate (Chercheuse qualifiée ou Chercheur qualifié - CQ) and Incentive Grant for Scientific Research (Mandat d'impulsion scientifique -MIS).

1. CONTENT OF A PROPOSAL

Applicants will have the choice of writing their proposal either in French or in English.

They can use this [link](#) to download all the template documents (in .docx) to be filled within their application.

The F.R.S.-FNRS insists on **strict compliance with the [instructions](#) given for each template document** (expected contain, number of pages...) and reminds that the juries have the final say in the assessment of the application file.

NOTICE: no further change or modification to the proposal can be made after the validation deadline set for the applicant.

One of the specificities of the FRESH Fund relates to the **societal impact** of the funded research programmes. The FRESH Fund supports fundamental research projects whose outcomes are likely to improve the understanding or functioning of one sector in the society in the short-medium term at a local, regional, national or international level, from many perspectives such as culture, economy, politics, sociology and psychosociology.

Applicants may identify, in their scientific reflection, the potential beneficiaries and/or societal benefits resulting from their research project. Applicants also mention **a reference person substantially involved in the field outside the academic sphere** who will be contacted by the F.R.S.-FNRS to provide an opinion letter as part of their application.

We emphasize the importance of providing this opinion letter. The absence of that letter could be prejudicial to the assessment of the application.

The application file contains the main sections described hereafter.

SECTION	CONTENT
RESEARCHER	Information that enables to verify the eligibility criteria (degrees, graduation date, institution)
	Academic background
	Awards and honours (max. 5)
	The applicant's list of publications (published or accepted, if any), structured according to the template document . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ As stated in section 3.2, in case of publications accepted after the applicant validation deadline, applicants may add them until 30th September.
	Professional background , including relevant activities with regard to the research project
	Title of the Master's thesis
RESEARCH PROJECT	Title in French and in English (max. 200 characters each, including spaces) and, Abstract in French and in English (max. 2,000 characters each, including spaces) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ In case of funding, these are released and made public on the F.R.S.-FNRS website.
	Selection of the jury and selection of 2 to 6 descriptor fields in order of relevance , which can be supplemented by some unrestricted keywords . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ If applicants select only one descriptor field corresponding to the jury selected, they shall justify their choice in the application form.
	To be completed imperatively using the template document available in English or in French. As a reminder, the applicants can use this link to download all the template documents (in .docx) to be filled within their application. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ For all applicants, description of the project divided into 4 parts accompanied by a reference bibliography: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Goals of the research

SECTION	CONTENT
	2. <i>State of the art</i> 3. <i>Research project</i> 4. <i>Work plan</i> ➤ <i>Activities report of the 1st year of Ph.D. - For 1st Grant-2nd year applicants only.</i>
	Applicants may identify, in their scientific reflection, the potential beneficiaries and/or societal benefits resulting from their research project.
WORK ENVIRONMENT	Facts allowing to assess whether the environment (the intellectual means and/or equipment available to the applicant) is consistent with the aims of the research project. ➤ <i>Data can vary depending on the nature of the project and the scientific field.</i>
REFERENCE PERSONS	Contact details (first name, surname, email) of: - 1 reference person (different from the promoter) member of the academic staff of a scientific institution, - 1 reference person involved in the field outside the academic sphere. ➤ <i>Applicants shall contact the reference persons prior to mentioning their contact details in the application form to make sure that they are willing to provide an opinion letter following the instructions they will be given.</i>

By submitting an application form, the applicant renounces all access to the confidential opinion letters related to their application (promoter and reference persons).

No information will be communicated to the applicant on the receipt of the letters to ensure confidentiality.

2. (PRE)SELECTION PROCEDURE, JURIES

2.1 Composition of juries

Applications for a 1st Grant will be evaluated by five juries: one is dedicated to cultural challenges, the four others to economic and social challenges.

These 5 juries cover the following subject areas:

- **"Cultural Challenges" jury (DC):** Cultural Anthropology / Architecture / Arts, cultural studies (including Performing Arts); Historical Approach to the Arts / History, Archaeology / Linguistics / Literature / Philosophy
- **"Economic and Social Challenges 1" jury (DES-1):** Psychology / Social Psychology / Education Sciences
- **"Economic and Social Challenges 2" jury (DES-2):** Law and Criminology / Economics / Management
- **"Economic and Social Challenges 3" jury (DES-3):** Political Science, International Relations/ Human and Social Geography, Demography
- **"Economic and Social Challenges 4" jury (DES-4):** Sociology, Communication, Science and Technology Studies / Social Anthropology

The DC jury is made up of 3 civil society representatives and 19 to 21 members, 11 to 13 full members and 8 alternate members, from French-speaking Community of Belgium universities respecting, for the full members, the balance between universities:

- 3 UCLouvain, 3 ULB, 3 ULiège
- 1 or 2⁵ UMons, 1 or 2³ UNamur

The balance between universities for alternate members:

- 2 UCLouvain, 2 ULB, 2 ULiège
- 1 UMons, 1 UNamur

The DES juries are made up of 1 civil society representative and 11 to 13 members from French-speaking Community of Belgium universities, respecting the balance between universities:

- 3 UCLouvain, 3 ULB, 3 ULiège
- 1 or 2³ UMons, 1 or 2³ UNamur

Applicants' promoter and co-promoter may not sit or even partially take part in the jury of their applicants.

The composition of the FRESH juries is available [here](#). It is subject to modifications depending on the conflicts of interest (COI) that might be reported by juries' members. The composition also depends on the availability of members, any withdrawal or replacement, and may vary accordingly.

2.2 **(Pre)selection procedure**

The F.R.S.-FNRS Board of Trustees has decided to establish a **pre-selection** of the application files. Members of the jury will focus on the scientific quality of the application by assessing four criteria as follows: **the research project (40%), the skills of the applicant with regard to their specialty (CV) (40%), the research environment (10%) and the potential societal impact of the project (10%)**. For each criterion, irrespective of their weight, applicants must meet a minimum quality threshold.

Pre-selected applicants are required to take an **oral examination**. Each application file is assigned to a rapporteur, depending on the 2-6 descriptor fields selected by the applicant. The applicant is interviewed by the members of the jury and the rapporteur, who leads the discussion.

Juries shall devote 30 minutes at most to each applicant.

The oral presentation of the applicant shall not exceed 10 minutes.

Following the interview and the departure of the applicant the jury shall debate and grade them.

⁵ According to the university's scientific activity in the fields covered by the jury concerned.

3. EVALUATION CRITERIA - EVALUATION REPORT

The evaluation criteria taken into account are the following:

CRITERIA
Quality of the research project: Feasibility, originality, host laboratory, work plan, potential societal impact, and activities report (applicable only for applicants to a 1 st Grant 2 nd Year)
Skills of the applicant with regard to their speciality (CV)
Presentation and answers given to questions about the project
Scientific knowledge in general

For applicants to a FRESH 1st Grant, juries will assess their capability to conduct their doctoral research in 4 years. Depending on the progress of the research work, juries may decide to recommend applicants whether for a 1st Grant 1st year or 1st Grant 2nd year.

In accordance with the “European Charter for Researchers”, all applicants will receive an evaluation report following the meeting of the FRESH Board of Trustees in December.

ALL DOCUMENTS, GUIDES, RULES AND REGULATIONS AND PRIVACY POLICY ARE AVAILABLE AT [HTTPS://WWW.FRS-FNRS.BE/EN/REGLEMENTS-GUIDES](https://www.frs-fnrs.be/en/reglements-guides) AND [HTTPS://WWW.FRS-FNRS.BE/EN/CHARTE-VIE-PRIVEE](https://www.frs-fnrs.be/en/charte-vie-privee)

QUESTIONS: bourses-mandats@frs-fnrs.be