

## **RULES AND REGULATIONS**

**RESEARCH PROJECT (PDR - PROJET DE RECHERCHE)**

**CREDITS AND PROJECTS CALL 2023**

**ADOPTED BY**

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

**ON 24<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2023**

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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 - FNRS<sup>1</sup> (F.R.S.-FNRS).

Since 2021, some European research funding agencies have mutually opened their project funding instruments to research teams from partner agencies of the Weave initiative. Researchers from the French-speaking Community of Belgium can therefore include partners from another partner agency in the PDR instrument of the F.R.S.-FNRS.

In 2023, the F.R.S.-FNRS offers the possibility to submit collaborative project proposals (bi or trilateral) as part of the PDR instrument within the framework of the Credits and Projects Call with:

- German research institutions eligible to the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG): German partners must comply with the guidelines of the [Weave page of DFG](#).
  - o Attention: projects in collaboration with a German partner have a duration of 3 years with a funding equal to that of a 4-year PDR.

The PDR starting date is set for the 1<sup>st</sup> April and the ending date for the 31<sup>st</sup> March.

- Flemish research institutions eligible to the Fonds Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek (FWO): Flemish partners must comply with the guidelines of the [Weave FWO page as a partner agency](#).
- Luxembourg research institutions eligible to the FNR Luxembourg (FNR): Luxembourg partners must comply with the guidelines of the [INTER programme](#) of the FNR.
- Swiss research institutions eligible to the SNSF Switzerland (SNSF): Swiss partners must comply with the guidelines of the [SNSF Weave page](#).

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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.*

Instrument	Duration	Characteristics	Co-promoter participation
PDR	2 years or 4 years	Single-university PDR	No
		Multi-university PDR	<b>Yes</b> <u>but</u> 1 maximum per institution. The co-promoter-applicant must be from another institution than the main promoter-applicant
PDR in collaboration with a German partner (DFG)	3 years	Single-university PDR	No
		Multi-university PDR	<b>Yes</b> <u>but</u> 1 maximum per institution. The co-promoter-applicant must be from another institution than the main promoter-applicant

**Main promoter:** Researcher responsible for the submission of the application. They can ask for budget related to the tasks of which they will be in charge during the accomplishment of the project.

**Co-promoter:** Researcher who takes part in the preparation of the application and in the accomplishment of the project in case of granting. As such, they can ask for a budget related to the tasks of which they will be in charge.

**Project contributor:** Researcher who has significantly contributed to the drafting of the application and/or who has expertise useful to the execution of the project. They cannot be assigned tasks or request a budget.

#### 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: APPLICATION

### II- A.: PROMOTERS

#### Article 4

The main promoter-applicant to a PDR must be:

- Either a Research Associate (CQ), a Senior Research Associate (MR) or a Research Director (DR) of the F.R.S.-FNRS who genuinely carries out the fellowship at the latest by 15<sup>th</sup> November of the year when submitting the application.

- Or a researcher-promoter of an ongoing Ulysse Incentive Grant for Mobility in Scientific Research (MISU) who genuinely carries out the fellowship at the latest by 15<sup>th</sup> November of the year when submitting the application.
- Or a researcher appointed in a university of the French-speaking community of Belgium listed in [Appendix 1](#) and must meet the following conditions altogether:
  - Be permanently<sup>2</sup> appointed to an academic or scientific position or on probation in that university.
  - This appointment must have a final and conclusive assent from the competent body to legitimize this appointment in accordance with the Law or the university regulations at the latest by 15<sup>th</sup> November of the year when submitting the application.
  - This academic or scientific position must be effective at the latest by 15<sup>th</sup> November of the year when submitting the application.

If the main promoter-applicant who is appointed permanently accesses the legal age of retirement / becomes professor emeritus after the validation deadline set 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 prior approval by the Head of institution where the research will be carried out.

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

The project contributor is not subjected to any eligibility rule.

#### Article 5

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

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

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

#### Article 6

Any promoter must comply with all the accumulation rules as detailed [here](#) as well as those regarding the [Weave](#) instrument.

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

#### Article 7

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

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<sup>2</sup> Research logisticians of rank A, as defined by the Royal Decree of 31<sup>st</sup> October 1953 fixing 'le statut des agrégés, des répétiteurs et des membres du personnel scientifique des universités de l'État', are allowed to be co-promoter-applicant provided they hold a Ph.D.

The application can be submitted in French or in English. It must only be submitted on [e-space](#), the online platform dedicated to the calls for proposals.

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) fields, as well as the Scientific Commission SHS-2, to submit their application in English<sup>3</sup>.

All PDR applications are submitted to a procedure including successive electronic validations on the dates that will be indicated when the call 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 file is complete.
- b. The validation by the co-promoters (if any, and for Multi-university PDR only): it accounts as an electronic signature.
- c. The validation by the research administration (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 set 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.

**No further change or modification** can be made in the proposal after the validation deadline set for the main promoter.

The validation dates are available in the mini-guide.

## **II- D.: ELIGIBILITY OF APPLICATIONS**

### Article 8

As part of PDR applications including other partner agencies of the Weave initiative, the F.R.S.-FNRS and each partner agency validate the eligibility of applications in accordance with their own criteria. In case an application has been declared ineligible by one of the partner agencies, the entire application will be declared as ineligible.

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

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

#### Article 9

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

- Personnel
- Operating
- Support operating
- Equipment

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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

Support operating costs 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 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 or computer equipment costs)
- Restaurant costs and expenses for foodstuffs (coffee, sugar, softs...) not related to missions or shift trips
- 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 duration of PDR is either 2 or 4 years.

The PDR starting date is set for the 1<sup>st</sup> January following the allocation decision date and the ending date for the 31<sup>st</sup> December.

#### **In the particular case of a PDR in collaboration with a German partner (DFG):**

- The PDR has a duration of 3 years,
- The PDR starting date is set for the 1<sup>st</sup> April following the allocation decision date and the ending date for the 31<sup>st</sup> March.

### Article 13

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

➤ € 30,000- to € 84,000-, **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 (€ 84,000- maximum limit on an annual average):

- Personnel total costs are limited to a maximum of € 52,500-, **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 € 31,500- **on an annual average** for the duration of the project. This limit can be extended up to a maximum of € 63,000- **on an annual average** for the duration of the project in case there is no request for Personnel in the PDR.

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

- € 30,000- to € 120,750-, **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 Multi-university PDR (€ 120,750- maximum limit on an annual average):

- Personnel total costs are limited to a maximum of € 105,000-, **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 € 15,750- **on an annual average** for the duration of the project. This limit can be extended up to a maximum of € 63,000- **on an annual average** for the duration of the project in case Personnel costs are minimised (requirement: the maximum limit of € 120,750- **on an annual average** for the duration of the project must be adhered).

Support operating costs (detailed in Article 10) are included in the budgetary limitation of the Single or Multi-university PDR and the maximum amount is of:

- € 5,250- **on an annual average** for the duration of the project, and per institution involved in the funding application.

#### Article 14

A **Single-university PDR in collaboration with a German partner (DFG)**<sup>4</sup> application enables to apply for funding ranging from:

- € 120,000- to € 336,000- for the duration of the project.

Personnel costs (non mandatory) amount to:

- 1 full-time equivalent (FTE) **maximum**, for the duration of the project (i.e. maximum 36 months),
- In case of hiring of a Doctoral Researcher, this duration may be extended to maximum 48 months.

Concerning Single-university PDR (€ 336,000- maximum limit for the duration of the project):

- Personnel total costs are limited to a maximum of € 210,000-, for the duration of the project (to be justified in the application file), and,
- Operating, Support operating and Equipment costs are limited to € 126,000- for the duration of the project. This limit can be extended up to a maximum of € 252,000- for the duration of the project in case there is no request for Personnel in the PDR.

A **Multi-university PDR in collaboration with a German partner (DFG)** application enables to apply for funding ranging from:

- € 120,000- to € 483,000- for the duration of the project.

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<sup>4</sup> Article 14 uses the wording "for the duration of the project" to soften the rules of application with the DFG (4-year funding for a duration of 3 years). Nevertheless, the "annual average" principle still applies: in this case, the amounts must be divided by three to comply with the annual average budget limitations.



Personnel costs (non mandatory) amount to:

- 2 full-time equivalent (FTE) **maximum**, on an annual average for the duration of the project (i.e. maximum 36 months by FTE),
- In case of hiring of a Doctoral Researcher, this duration may be extended to maximum 48 months.

Concerning Multi-university PDR (€ 483,000- maximum limit for the duration of the project):

- Personnel total costs are limited to a maximum of € 420,000-, for the duration of the project (to be justified in the application file), and,
- Operating, Support operating and Equipment costs are limited to € 63,000- for the duration of the project. This limit can be extended up to a maximum of € 252,000- for the duration of the project in case Personnel costs are minimised (requirement: the maximum limit of € 483,000- for the duration of the project must be adhered).

Support operating costs (detailed in Article 10) are included in the budgetary limitation of the Single or Multi-university PDR and the maximum amount is of:

- € 21,000- for the duration of the project, and per institution involved in the funding application.

#### Article 15

If the research project includes the training of a doctoral student, **the promoter-applicant of a PDR in collaboration with a German partner (DFG)** may request Doctoral Researcher personnel for a maximum duration of 4 years, at a steady budget, in order to enable them to finish their thesis.

#### Article 16

Categories of personnel<sup>5</sup> are detailed in the table hereafter.

Categories	Activity	
	Part time	Full time
Doctoral Researcher – Grant <sup>6</sup> or Salary	x	x
Postdoctoral Researcher <sup>7</sup>	x	x
Non-doctoral Researcher – Salary)	x	x
Technician – Salary	x	x

n/a = not applicable

Promoters are allowed to recruit personnel **for a minimum of one month**. The identity of the personnel is not required when submitting a PDR application.

#### Article 17

On the date of the hiring by the host institution, Doctoral Researchers must have obtained one of the following degrees:

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<sup>5</sup> *For all personnel*, the promoter shall contact the relevant department of their host institution to determine their status and obtain an estimate of the total personnel costs involved based on the scientific seniority.

<sup>6</sup> In case of a grant, the Doctoral Researcher must only be hired on a full-time basis.

<sup>7</sup> The promoter shall contact the relevant department of their host institution in order to determine the Postdoctoral Researcher's status (Mobility situation, grant, employee...) and the work time.

- 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.

#### Article 18

On the date of the hiring by the host institution, Postdoctoral Researchers must have obtained a doctoral academic degree after the defence of a thesis.

#### Article 19

Holders of a Master's degree (or equivalent) or a Ph.D. are not eligible under the Technician category.

Holders of a Master's degree (or equivalent) are eligible for Non-doctoral Researcher category. The Non-doctoral Researcher cannot, under any circumstances, start any personal research work leading to a Ph.D. during the working hours devoted to this function.

#### Article 20

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

- Members of the teaching, scientific, administrative or technical personnel 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: EXAMINATION OF APPLICATIONS**

#### Article 21

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"> <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 22

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 23

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;
- **The host institution.**

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

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

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

### Article 24

Grants awarded to promoters include the following categories: personnel costs, operating costs, support operating costs and equipment costs.

Transfers of funds between categories and changes within a category or to personnel hiring periods are allowed.

Any change to planned expenses must be notified to the F.R.S.-FNRS.

### Article 25

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

### Article 26

The overall budget of the project can be used for up to 12 months from the end of the agreement.

**As part of a PDR in collaboration with a German partner (DFG)**, Doctoral Researchers can be hired for a period exceeding the end date of the agreement (for a maximum of 4 years, see article 15). If so, the overall budget of the project can be used for up to 24 months from the end of the agreement.

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

### Article 27

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.

The supporting documents justifying operating (including support operating costs) and equipment costs must be sent before 1<sup>st</sup> March directly following the deadline to use the concerned budget.

## CHAPTER VI: MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

### Article 28

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 29

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 PROMOTERS

### Article 30

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

### Article 31

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 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 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 33

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 during the entire duration of the PDR extended by a 2-year period.

## 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><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 (UCLouvain) Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB) Université de Liège (ULiège) Université de Mons (UMons) Université de Namur (UNamur)</p>
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<p><b>Candidat promoteur principal et candidat co-promoteur d'une université CFB / Main promoter-applicant and co-promoter-applicant of a CFB university</b></p>	<p>➤ <b>Universités de la Communauté française de Belgique (CFB)</b> <b>Universities of the French-speaking Community of Belgium (CFB)</b></p> <p>Université Catholique de Louvain (UCLouvain) Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB) Université de Liège (ULiège) Université de Mons (UMons) Université de Namur (UNamur)</p>
<p><b>Candidat co-promoteur (de régime linguistique francophone) attaché à l'une de ces institutions / French speaking co-promoter-applicant attached to one of these institutions</b></p>	<p>➤ École royale militaire (E.R.M.)</p> <p>➤ <b>Établissements scientifiques fédéraux</b> <b>State Scientific Institutions</b></p> <p>Archives de l'État (AE) 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.) KBR (Bibliothèque royale de Belgique) 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>➤ LABIRIS</p> <p>➤ Jardin Botanique Meise (J.B.M. – Jardin Botanique National de Belgique)</p> <p>➤ Musée royal de Mariemont</p> <p>➤ Sciensano</p>