

RULES AND REGULATIONS
THEMATIC RESEARCH PROJECT
(PDR-THEMA)

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 F.R.S.-FNRS Thematic Research Project (PDR-THEMA).

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 initiator: Researcher whose skills and/or knowledge will be useful for the accomplishment of the project but who will not be in charge of any tasks. They cannot ask for a budget.

Article 2

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

Article 3

The participation of one or several co-promoters is allowed, should they are attached to an institution of the French-speaking community of Belgium (CFB), as listed in [appendix 1](#). The participation of several co-promoters in the project does not entail any augmentation of the budget envelope.

The PDR-THEMA allows for the participation of a maximum of 2 institutions outside the CFB, involving maximum 1 co-promoter per institution. The budget part which can be allocated to those co-promoters outside the CFB is detailed under article 11.

Article 4

PDR-THEMA calls enable to apply for funding for an overall period of 3 years. Any exception should be referred in the mini-guide related to the call at hand, particularly under the section "Instrument's characteristics and Thematic framework".

Article 5

The starting date of the PDR-THEMA research project is referred in the mini-guide related to the call at hand.

The same applies to specific rules on the thematic scope, eligibility criteria... particularly under the section "Exemptions with regard to the PDR-THEMA Regulations".

CHAPTER II: APPLICATION

Article 6

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

In case of collaboration between a main promoter and a co-promoter, both should actively participate in setting up and carrying out the project.

Standard eligibility criteria:

By the deadline of the call, the **main promoter-applicant** 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 appointed¹ or on probation, but holding a position equivalent to a permanent appointment in a university of the French-speaking community of Belgium listed in [appendix 1](#).

The promoter shall occupy this academic or scientific position by the starting date of the PDR-THEMA at the latest.

By the deadline of the call, the **CFB co-promoter-applicant(s)** 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 or institution of the French-speaking community of Belgium listed in [appendix 1](#).

The promoter shall occupy this academic or scientific position by the starting date of the PDR-THEMA at the latest.

As a principle, applicants who are from state scientific institutions, the ERM or research centers as listed in [appendix 1](#) may participate as CFB co-promoters only. Where provided, exceptions are referred in the mini-guide related to the call at hand.

By the deadline of the call, **every co-promoter-applicants outside the CFB** must:

- Hold a PhD for at least 4 years,
- Be affiliated to a research institution throughout the entire duration of the project,
- Be authorized to conduct research within his/her institution,

¹ Research logisticians of rank A, as defined by the Royal Decree of 31st 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 or project initiators provided they hold a Ph.D.

- Be authorized to incur expenses within his/her institution.

Derogatory eligibility criteria:

Eligibility criteria can be broadened. In that case it is referred in the mini-guide related to the PDR-THEMA call at hand.

in promoter-applicants as well as co-promoters (if any) who have legally accessed pension by the closing date of the call are not eligible. If a promoter-applicant accesses pension / becomes professor emeritus during the project, s/he must:

- Precisely describe how the project will be carried out after s/he is gone, and provide the identity and the curriculum vitae of the person who will take up the responsibilities within the framework of the project.

or

- Obtain and communicate the written approval from the institution for pursuing the research to the end.

In both cases, those clarifications must be notified to the F.R.S.-FNRS before the closing date of the call.

Article 7

CFB promoter(s) must comply with all the accumulation rules as referred to in [appendix 2](#).

Article 8

The opening of PDR-THEMA calls is published on the F.R.S.-FNRS website.

Article 9

Application must be submitted online via the [e-space](#) platform. Applications that have not been validated within the timeframe of the call cannot be considered.

Article 10

After submission of the applications, the F.R.S.-FNRS and research institutions shall verify applicants' eligibility. The F.R.S.-FNRS shall reserve the right to disqualify applicants who do not meet the requirements as provided for in the regulations (see article 6).

CHAPTER III: ELIGIBLE AND NON-ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Article 11

The PDR-THEMA instrument enables to apply for funding, of which budget may vary, depending on the call. The amount is always referred in the mini-guide related to the call at hand.

Budget requested for institutions outside French-speaking Belgium is limited to 20% of the total budget requested. Depending on the call, the ceiling may be reduced (see mini-guide related to the call at hand).

Article 12

As part of the PDR-THEMA, the allocated fund can cover **3 types of expenses:**

- **personnel;**
- **operating;**
- **equipment.**

Article 13

Personnel costs are optional and not subject to limitation.

Article 14

Categories of personnel² are detailed in the table below.

| Categories | Activity | |
|---|-----------|-----------|
| | Part time | Full time |
| Doctoral Researcher – Grant | n/a | x |
| Doctoral Researcher – Salary | x | x |
| Postdoctoral Researcher ³ | x | x |
| Non-doctoral Researcher ⁴ - Salary | x | x |
| Technician ⁵ - Salary | x | x |

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-THEMA application; however, the personnel category must be specified (see table above).

² *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.*

³ *The promoter contacts the relevant department of his/her institution to determine the status (mobility situation, employee...) of the Postdoctoral Researcher and the time of occupation.*

⁴ *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.*

⁵ *Holders of a Master's degree (or equivalent) or a Ph.D. cannot be recruited under this category.*

Article 15

Team's personnel whose remuneration costs are not charged to the PDR-THEMA may include amongst others:

- Members of the teaching, scientific, administrative or technical staff from the universities of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation,
- 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.

Article 16

The following operating costs are not authorized:

- 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).

Article 17

Some expenses are capped:

- MRI \leq 3 Tesla at € 350/hour
- MRI $>$ 3 Tesla at € 500/hour
- MEG at € 300/hour

Article 18

Subcontracting is limited to 20% of the total budget requested. Subcontracting claim implies that the promoter provides the F.R.S.-FNRS with:

1. A comprehensive description of the services
2. Invoices or expense reports issues by the service provider

Article 19

Equipment costs are limited to 30% of the total budget requested. Institutions outside the CFB may not acquire any device or equipment. They may claim personnel and operating costs only.

CHAPTER IV: APPLICATIONS EXAMINATION AND FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

Article 20

In the frame of PDR-THEMA calls for applications, the evaluation is conducted by a specific expert panel. Each panel is composed of experts appointed by the Board of Trustees of the F.R.S.-FNRS.

The evaluation criteria are referred in the mini-guide related to the call at hand. Those criteria may slightly differ from one thematic framework to another depending on the call. In any case the F.R.S.-FNRS stresses the scientific excellence, in accordance with its mainstream policy.

The calendar and evaluation process are specific for each call and described in the mini-guide related to the call at hand.

Article 21

The decision-making body of the F.R.S.-FNRS allocates funds according to the budget that is available.

Article 22

Funding granted through the PDR-THEMA instrument is subject to a granting letter and 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. Transfer between these 3 items may be accepted during the project, subject to written notification to the F.R.S.-FNRS. Transfers between the main promoter and the co-promoter(s) during the course of the project are permitted, subject to notification to the F.R.S.-FNRS by the main promoter and the co-promoter(s).
- **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 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 23

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.

Supporting documents relating to claims from partners outside the CFB (article 11) should bear the reference « FRAIS HCFB » to be identified clearly.

Supporting documents relating to subcontracting (article 18) should bear the reference « FRAIS SOUS-TRAITANCE » to be identified clearly.

Refund from the F.R.S.-FNRS shall not apply to supporting documents which, a posteriori, would eventually relate to « FRAIS HCFB » costs or « SOUS-TRAITANCE » fees while they would have not been identified as such by the Institution's financial department.

Article 24

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

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 25

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

Concerning Personnel categories there is some flexibility in terms of annual costs and duration, should the granting duration and maximum amount not be exceeded.

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

CHAPTER V : MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

Article 26

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 27

- The grants destined for the personnel are available only for the duration 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. 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 VI: 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 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.

Furthermore, in case of collaboration between several institutions (including institutions outside the French-speaking Belgium), the F.R.S.-FNRS encourages partners involved in the project funded to agree on an agreement. This agreement should include provisions relating to intellectual property.

Article 31

Promoters shall observe the project reporting terms as referred to in the mini-guide.

Article 32

Researchers shall inform their institution about their missions and follow the procedure in place in their institution.

F.R.S.-FNRS fellows and researchers also shall respect the procedure with regard to stays abroad as referred to in their respective fellowship regulations.

Article 33

Pursuant to the regulations 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 (http://www.frs-fnrs.be/docs/Reglement_OPEN_ACCESS_FR.pdf), any scientific publication resulting partially or fully from the funding granted as part of the PDR-THEMA instrument shall mention the source of this funding as follows: « *This work was supported by the PDR-THEMA funding scheme from Fonds de la Recherche Scientifique - FNRS under Grant(s) n° (agreement number) ».*

APPENDIX 1: INSTITUTIONS DE RATTACHEMENT / ELIGIBLE INSTITUTIONS

| | |
|---|--|
| <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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Université Catholique de Louvain (UCLouvain) Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB) Université de Liège (ULiège) Université de Mons (UMons) Université de Namur (UNamur) Université Saint-Louis - Bruxelles (USL-B) |
| <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>➤ École royale militaire (E.R.M.)</p> <p>➤ Établissements scientifiques fédéraux State Scientific Institutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Archives de l'État (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>➤ 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> |

APPENDIX 2: ACCUMULATIONS RULES

Rule 1

One may combine several F.R.S.-FNRS funding schemes, e.g., CDR, PDR, EQP, PINT-BILAT-P, PINT-BILAT-M, PINT-MULTI.

Rule 2

The number of applications that can be submitted as a main promoter or co-promoter (including co-promoters outside the CFB) is limited to a single application per PDR-THEMA call.

Rule 3

The project submitted to the PDR-THEMA cannot be identical to a PDR-THEMA project currently being funded or to a project previously funded by a PDR-THEMA.

Rule 4

In case of recurring PDR-THEMA calls on the same theme, laureates may not apply for the next edition if its closing date is set before 18 months following the previous edition. In this case, the closing date is the validation deadline fixed for the main promoter-applicant on the [e-space](#) platform.

Rule 5

The F.R.S.-FNRS reserves the right to ask the promoters for a justification in case the submitted PDR-THEMA project is similar to a PDR project submitted in the framework of the call for Credits and Projects. This justification could then be transmitted to the members of both Commissions.