



## **RULES AND REGULATIONS**

### **EXCEPTIONAL RESEARCH PROJECT 2020 (PER - PROJET EXCEPTIONNEL DE RECHERCHE)**

**ADOPTED BY  
THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE F.R.S.-FNRS  
ON 30<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2020**

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## CHAPTER I: SCOPE

### Article 1

The rules and regulations hereinafter are only applicable to the Exceptionnal Research Project (PER) instrument enabling the funding of research projects within the framework of the 2020 Coronavirus Call of the Fund for Scientific Research - FNRS<sup>1</sup> (F.R.S.-FNRS).

Instrument	Duration	Characteristics	Other participants allowed?
PER	2 years	Single or Cross-university PER	Yes, with no limited number and no obligation to originate from different institutions

**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 can not ask for 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 PER 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 by the time of the validation deadline set for the academic authorities (rectors) at the latest.
- 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:

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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.

- 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's regulations by the time of the validation deadline set for the academic authorities (rectors) at the latest.
- This academic or scientific position must be effective by the time of the starting date of the PER project, i.e. by 1<sup>st</sup> September, at the latest.

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.

#### Article 5

The PER allows the participation of co-promoters.

Any co-promoter applicant involved in a PER shall meet the eligibility criteria as referred to in article 4.

The project initiator is not subjected to any eligibility rule.

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

#### Article 6

PER are not subjected to any accumulation rule towards other F.R.S.-FNRS fundings, including "Crédits Urgents de Recherche (CUR)" It is however required, for all candidates, to mention if their project is related to a CUR funding request.

A researcher may submit and be granted funding for a maximum of 1 project as main promoter and 1 project as a co-promoter. A researcher may, however, take part in other projects as a project initiator.

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

#### Article 7

The 2020 Coronavirus Call is opened following the decision of the Board of Trustees of the F.R.S.-FNRS and is published on the F.R.S.-FNRS website.

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

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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 only allowed to be project initiators provided they hold a Ph.D.

It is recommended to applicants in the fields of SEN (Exact and Natural Sciences), SVS (Health and Life Sciences) and in "Cognition, Psychology, Education" to submit their application in English<sup>3</sup>.

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

- a. The validation by the main promoter, responsible towards the F.R.S.-FNRS administration: it accounts as a confirmation that the application is complete.
- b. The validation by co-promoters (if any): 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 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.

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 PER, the allocated fund can cover 3 types of expenses:

- Personnel
- Operating
- Equipment

Subcontracting fees, included in operating costs, are limited to a maximum of 20% of the overall project budget. In exceptional circumstances, and only with specific justification, this subcontracting fee cap can be raised above this limit.

#### Article 9

Some expenses are capped:

- MRI ≤ 3 Tesla at € 350/hour
- MRI > 3 Tesla at € 500/hour
- MEG at € 300/hour

#### Article 10

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

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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](#).

- 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 11

PER has a duration of 2 years.

The PER starting date is set for 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020 and the ending date for 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022.

#### Article 12

The PER enables to apply for a maximum funding of €130,000- on an annual average.

Personnel (non-mandatory) costs are not capped.

#### Article 13

Categories of personnel<sup>4</sup> are detailed in the table below:

Categories	Activity	
	Part time	Full time
Doctoral Researcher <sup>5</sup> – Grant or Salary	x	x
Postdoctoral Researcher – Salary	x	x
Short-term Postdoctoral Researcher – Grant (capped)	n/a	x
Non-doctoral Researcher – Salary (capped)	x	x
Technician – Salary (capped)	x	x

n/a = not applicable

Promoters are allowed to recruit personnel **for a minimum of one month** and the duration may not exceed the maximal duration of the funding agreement.

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<sup>4</sup> *For all categories, the promoter shall contact the relevant department of his/her university to obtain an estimate of the total personnel costs involved based on the scientific seniority.*

**Those amounts cannot be changed after submission of the application.**

*Short-term Postdoctoral Researcher, Non-doctoral Researcher and Technician categories are subject to an annual limit, calculated in proportion to the number of days worked. Limitations in force for the first year of funding are detailed in the Coronavirus Call mini-guide.*

<sup>5</sup> *In case of a grant, the Doctoral Researcher must be hired on a full-time basis.*

The identity of the personnel is not required when submitting a PER application; however, the personnel category must be specified (see table above). Curricula vitae are not provided to the members of the Scientific Commissions.

#### Article 14

On the date of the hiring, Doctoral Researcher 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 7<sup>th</sup> November 2013 that defines the landscape of Higher Education and the academic studies organisation.

#### Article 15

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).

#### Article 16

Holders of a Master's degree (or equivalent) or a Ph.D. cannot be recruited under the Technician category.

Holders of a Master's degree can be requested in the Non-doctoral Researcher category. The Non-doctoral Researcher is not allowed to be enrolled in a Ph.D. programme and s/he cannot apply either for a Ph.D. programme.

#### Article 17

Teams' personnel whose remuneration costs are not charged to the PER 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: EXAMINATION OF APPLICATIONS**

#### Article 18

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

CRITERIA	WEIGHT
➤ Quality of the promoter and co-promoter(s): ability to carry the project	40%
➤ Quality of the project: hypothesis, method and feasibility	40%
➤ Efficiency of the answers towards the stakes of global health crises	20%

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 19

The Board of Trustees 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 20

Funding granted through the PER 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. Transfer between these 3 items may be accepted during the project, subject to written notification to the F.R.S.-FNRS;
- **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 21

Any change made to the planned expenditures must receive the prior written approval of the F.R.S.-FNRS.

The budget devoted to the personnel is available only for the duration of the agreement and is divided according to the provisions of the agreement.

The budget devoted to operating and equipment costs can be used for the duration of the agreement, with an additional 12-month period.

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

#### Article 22



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 1<sup>st</sup> March of the following year.

For operating and/or equipment costs, the supporting documents must be sent at the latest 18 months after the end of the research agreement, i.e., before 1<sup>st</sup> March of the year in question.

#### Article 23

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 24

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

As for the Short-term Postdoctoral Researchers, the Non-doctoral Researcher and the technical staff, the F.R.S.-FNRS contribution is subject to an annual limit assigned from the Fund and is calculated in proportion to the number of days worked.

#### Article 25

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 23 § 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 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

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 28

Any funded research programme must comply with the legal provisions in force regarding ethics. F.R.S.-FNRS will proceed to the reimbursement of expenses based on supporting documents only after receiving favourable decision from the competent bodies regarding ethical matters.

#### Article 29

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 30

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 PER 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]"*.

## **APPENDIX 1**

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

PER Instrument

Coronavirus Call

**Instrument Projet Exceptionnel de Recherche / Exceptional Research Project**

(PER MONO-UNIVERSITAIRE)

<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) Université Saint-Louis - Bruxelles (USL-B)</p>
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**Instrument Projet Exceptionnel de Recherche / Exceptional Research Project**

(PER PLURI-UNIVERSITAIRE)

<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) Université Saint-Louis - Bruxelles (USL-B)</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) KBR (Bibliothèque royale de Belgique) 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 Meise (J.B.M. – Jardin Botanique National de Belgique)</p> <p>➤ Musée royal de Mariemont</p> <p>➤ Sciensano</p>