

RULES AND REGULATIONS
RESEARCH PROJECT WELCHANGE

ADOPTED BY
THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE F.R.S.-FNRS
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	2
CHAPTER I: SCOPE.....	3
CHAPTER II: APPLICATION	4
<u>II- A.:</u> Promoters	4
<u>II- B.:</u> Accumulation rules.....	5
<u>II- C.:</u> Submission of application.....	5
CHAPTER III: NATURE AND DURATION OF THE FUNDING	5
<u>III- A.:</u> Eligible and non-eligible expenses.....	5
<u>III- B.:</u> Funding characteristics and provisions	6
CHAPTER IV: EXAMINATION OF APPLICATIONS	8
CHAPTER V: FINANCIAL PROVISIONS	8
CHAPTER VI: MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS	10
CHAPTER VII: RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF THE PROMOTERS.....	10
APPENDIX 1.....	11

CHAPTER I: SCOPE

Article 1

The rules and regulations hereinafter are only applicable to the instrument WELCHANGE enabling the financing of research projects with potential societal impacts¹ in the field of Social Sciences and Humanities (SHS), within the framework of the FNRS-WELCHANGE 2023 call of the Fund for Scientific Research – FNRS². The research projects must be led by a main promoter from SHS³ in possible collaboration with co-promoters, including co-promoters from Life Sciences (SVS) or Natural Sciences (SEN).

Instrument	Duration	Characteristics	Co-promoter participation
WELCHANGE	4 years	Single-university WELCHANGE	No
		Multi-university WELCHANGE	Yes <u>but</u> 1 maximum per institution different from that of the main promoter-applicant; The co-promoter-applicant may be active in a complementary field (SVS, SEN)

Main promoter: Researcher responsible for the submission of the application; he/she must be active in the field of SHS. He/she 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; he/she may be active in the field of SVS or SEN. 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.

¹ The main promoter identifies in its scientific reflection the potential beneficiaries and/or societal benefits resulting from its research project.

² The Fund for Scientific Research - FNRS shall be understood as the F.R.S.-FNRS and its Associated Funds.

³ The main promoter identifies its main field of activity in one of the following descriptors: Sociology; Anthropology; Political Science; Communication; Demography; Human Geography; Urbanism, Mobility, Architecture; Philosophy; History, Archaeology, Cultural Heritage, Art History; Psychology; Gender Studies; Literature; Linguistics; Languages; Economics, Finance and Management; Law, Criminology.

CHAPTER II: APPLICATION

II- A.: PROMOTERS

Article 4

The main promoter-applicant to a WELCHANGE must be:

- Either a Research Associate (CQ), a Senior Research Associate (MR) or a Research Director (DR) of the F.R.S.-FNRS and assuming the function and duties of such position by the validation deadline fixed for the academic authorities (rectors) to validate the application,
- Or a researcher-promoter of an ongoing Ulysse Incentive Grant for Mobility in Scientific Research (MISU) and assuming the function and duties of such position by the validation deadline fixed for the academic authorities (rectors) to validate the application,
- Or a researcher appointed in a university of the French-speaking Community of Belgium (CFB) listed in [Appendix 1](#) and meet the following conditions altogether:
 - Be permanently⁴ 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 by the time of the validation deadline fixed for the academic authorities (rectors) at the latest.
 - This academic or scientific position must be effective by the starting date of the programme.

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 initiator is not subjected to any eligibility rule.

Article 5

The **Multi-university WELCHANGE** 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 WELCHANGE** shall also meet the eligibility criteria as referred to in article 4.

⁴ 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 provided they hold a Ph.D.

II- B.: ACCUMULATION RULES

Article 6

In the same call, a researcher is allowed to submit only one application for WELCHANGE funding, either as main promoter or as co-promoter.

II- C.: SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION

Article 7

The FNRS-WELCHANGE is opened following decision by the FRS-FNRS Board of Trustees 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 on [e-space](#), the online platform dedicated to the calls for proposals.

All WELCHANGE 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 WELCHANGE only): it accounts as an electronic signature.
- c. The validation by the academic authorities (rectors) 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 by the main promoter.

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 WELCHANGE the allocated fund can cover 3 types of expenses:

- Personnel
- Operating
- Equipment

Article 9

Some expenses in the operating category 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
- 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

The duration of WELCHANGE is for a period of 4 years.

The WELCHANGE starting date is set for the 1st January following the allocation decision date and the ending date for the 31st December.

Article 12

A **Single-university WELCHANGE** 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 WELCHANGE (€ 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 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 WELCHANGE.

A **Multi-university WELCHANGE** 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 WELCHANGE (€ 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 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

Article 13

Categories of personnel⁵ are detailed in the table hereafter.

Categories	Activity	
	Part time	Full time
Doctoral Researcher – Grant ⁶ or Salary	x	x
Postdoctoral Researcher ⁷	x	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**.

The identity of the personnel is not required when submitting a WELCHANGE application.

Article 14

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

- 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 7th November 2013 that defines the landscape of Higher Education and the academic studies organisation.

Article 15

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 16

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

⁵ *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.*

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 WELCHANGE Call mini-guide.

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

⁷ *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.*

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 17

Teams' personnel whose remuneration costs are not charged to the WELCHANGE 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 18

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

CRITERIA
Quality of the promoters (40%): <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ CV and publications➤ International recognition➤ Main research achievements
Quality of the research programme (40%): <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Feasibility➤ Methodology and relevance➤ Originality➤ Collaborations
Relevance of the potential societal impacts (20%): <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Does the project convincingly identify potential beneficiaries and/or societal benefits?

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 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 20

Funding granted through the WELCHANGE 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 21

Grants awarded to promoters include the following categories: personnel costs, 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 22

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

As for Non-doctoral Researchers and technical personnel, 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 23

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

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

Article 24

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.

The supporting documents justifying operating and equipment costs must be sent before 1st March directly following the deadline to use the concerned budget.

CHAPTER VI: MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

Article 25

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 26

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 27

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

Article 28

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 29

An activity report will be requested at the end of the project according to the terms of the research agreement.

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 WELCHANGE 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

WELCHANGE Instrument

FNRS-WELCHANGE Call

Attached institutions

WELCHANGE Instrument

(SINGLE-UNIVERSITY WELCHANGE RESEARCH PROJECT)

<p>Promoter-applicant of a CFB university</p>	<p>➤ Universities of the French-speaking Community of Belgium (CFB)</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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Attached institutions

WELCHANGE Instrument

(MULTI-UNIVERSITY WELCHANGE RESEARCH PROJECT)

<p>Main promoter-applicant and co-promoter-applicant of a CFB university</p>	<p>➤ Universities of the French-speaking Community of Belgium (CFB)</p> <p>Université Catholique de Louvain (UCLouvain)</p> <p>Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB)</p> <p>Université de Liège (ULiège)</p> <p>Université de Mons (UMons)</p> <p>Université de Namur (UNamur)</p> <p>Université Saint-Louis - Bruxelles (USL-B)</p>
<p>French speaking co-promoter-applicant attached to one of these institutions</p>	<p>➤ École royale militaire (E.R.M.)</p> <p>➤ State Scientific Institutions</p> <p>Archives de l'État (AE)</p> <p>Institut d'Aéronomie spatiale de Belgique (I.A.S.)</p> <p>Institut royal météorologique de Belgique (I.R.M.)</p> <p>Institut royal du Patrimoine artistique (I.R.P.A.)</p> <p>Institut royal des Sciences naturelles de Belgique (I.R.S.N.B.)</p> <p>KBR (Bibliothèque royale de Belgique)</p> <p>Musée royal de l'Afrique centrale (M.R.A.C.)</p> <p>Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire (M.R.A.H.)</p> <p>Musées royaux des Beaux-arts de Belgique (M.R.B.A.B.)</p> <p>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>