

MINI GUIDE WEL-T INVESTIGATOR PROGRAMME 2026

1. SCHEDULE

Opening of the call on the web-based application of the F.R.S.-FNRS [e-space](#) for the online submission: **THURSDAY, 17TH SEPTEMBER 2026**.

FRFS-WEL-T CALL - INVESTIGATOR PROGRAMME 2026			
STEPS	RESPONSIBLE PERSONS/BODY	INSTRUMENT ¹	
		STARTING (STG)	ADVANCED (ADV)
OPENING OF THE CALL	PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR (PI)	Thursday, 17th September 2026	
DEADLINES FOR ELECTRONIC VALIDATION ²	PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR (PI)	Thursday, 5th November 2026 - 2pm	
	RECTOR	Thursday, 12th November 2026 - 2pm	
PROJECTS' ASSESSMENT STEPS	INDIVIDUAL ASSESSMENTS BY EXPERTS AND CONSOLIDATION BY THE SCIENTIFIC COMMISSION	December – April 2027	
INTERVIEWS OF STARTING CANDIDATES	SCIENTIFIC COMMISSION	April 14 & 15, 2027	
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS FRFS		June 2027	
START OF CONVENTION		1 October 2027	
END OF CONVENTION		30 September 2029 (30 September 2031 in case of reconduction)	

* The exact date and time, and the practical modalities of the interview, will be communicated to the PIs in due course. It is the responsibility of the candidates in the Starting category to be available on these dates; no exceptions will be made.

2. SCOPE OF THE “WEL-T INVESTIGATOR PROGRAMME” CALL

The **Fund for Strategic Fundamental Research (FRFS)** is an Associated Fund of the F.R.S.-FNRS. Its purpose, within the framework of a mission assigned by the Walloon region, is to fund fundamental research of excellence in strategic axes through rigorously selected programmes carried out by Principal Investigators within the universities of the French-speaking Community of Belgium.

The **WEL Research Institute** is an inter-university research institute whose mission is to support excellence in strategic fundamental research within its departments, with a view to translate disruptive innovations into a societal impact in the fields of health and sustainable transition.

The **WEL-T** (Walloon Excellence in Technology) funding instrument corresponds to a strategic axis of the FRFS and a department of the WEL Research Institute. It supports strategic fundamental research of excellence in engineering, chemistry and physics with a view to

¹ See section “Characteristics of the instruments”

² All times are Brussels local time.

developing breakthrough innovations for industrial applications aimed at sustainable transition. Through this funding instrument, Wallonia grants significant resources over several years to WEL-T Investigators within the WEL Research Institute to develop ambitious research programmes and achieve major scientific breakthroughs. These programmes constitute a pillar of the Investigators' laboratory and are flexible, so the research scope can be adapted over time as needed.

The applicants to this call must demonstrate a combination of scientific excellence, an awareness of unmet sustainable transition needs in their field, and an understanding of the strategy required for translating their discoveries into practical applications for the industrial sector. This might typically involve, among other possibilities, prototype devices, open source or commercialized software, licensing or consultation on technological implementation of generated intellectual property, industrial collaboration or spin-offs.

3. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INSTRUMENTS

The FRFS-WEL-T research programme spans a 4-year period divided in two 2-year funding periods. At the end of the first two years, administrative reconduction for the second funding period is conducted within the limits of the financial resources available to the FRFS for the WEL-T strategic axis and in the absence of serious ethical or productivity breaches (article 34 of the regulation).

The call WEL-T INVESTIGATOR PROGRAMME 2026 enables to apply for funding through 2 instruments:

► Starting

Funding for the Starting instrument is maximum € 200k on an annual average over a 2-year funding period (years 1 and 2, years 3 and 4).

The applicant to the Starting instrument must be, by the validation deadline of his/her application by the academic authorities (rectors), holder of the academic degree of doctor, obtained after defense of a thesis and delivered by an academic institution, for a maximum of 12 years. The applicant must demonstrate scientific autonomy within the laboratory in which he/she evolves (the candidate has e.g. : publications as last author, publications independent from his/her usual environment,). The maximum period of 12 years is increased by:

- an additional 15 months per childbirth for mothers, or by an additional 12 months for biological fathers ;
- an additional 12 months per adoption for adopting mothers and fathers.

The eligible candidates who have been awarded a Starting Grant in a previous FRFS-WELBIO or FRFS-WEL-T call, regardless of their seniority, are not concerned by this category.

► Advanced

Funding for the Advanced instrument is maximum € 350k on an annual average over a 2-year funding period (years 1 and 2, years 3 and 4).

The instrument Advanced is open to the following researchers:

- Experienced with a seniority of more than 12 years ;

And/or

- Who have been awarded a Starting Grant in a previous FRFS-WELBIO or FRFS-WEL-T call, regardless of their seniority.

Applicants who were funded under the FRFS-WEL-T 2022 call, and who meet the eligibility criteria set out in article 5 of the regulation, must indicate the type of the instrument obtained in the 2022 call: Advanced Grant or Starting Grant.

4. ELIGIBLES COSTS

The eligible costs that can be requested through the Starting or Advanced instruments are of 3 types:

- Personnel
- Operating
- Equipment

Categories related to the **personnel** are detailed in the table below:

Categories	Activity	
	Part time	Full time
Doctoral Researcher – grant		x
Doctoral Researcher – salary	x	x
Postdoctoral Researcher	x	x
Non-doctoral Researcher – salary	x	x
Technician – salary	x	x

N/A = non applicable

At the moment of the application, the PI shall contact the relevant department of his host institution to assess the status of the personnel requested (mobility situation, grant, employee...), their working arrangements and an estimate of their cost based on the scientific seniority.

The personnel of the funded programme is employed by the host institution in accordance with the salary scales and regulations in force within that institution.

When employing staff, the institution is required to ensure that the eligibility criteria applicable to each staff category are met.

A doctoral researcher is a researcher in training pursuing third-cycle studies leading to the award of an academic doctoral degree.

A doctoral researcher holding a doctoral grant may only be employed on a full-time basis.

On the date of employment by the host institution, the doctoral researcher must be enrolled in a doctoral programme in compliance with the access conditions set out in the Décret du 7 novembre 2013 de la CFB définissant le paysage de l'enseignement supérieur et l'organisation académique des études.

A postdoctoral researcher is a researcher holding an academic doctoral degree and pursuing postdoctoral-level research.

On the date of the hiring by the host institution, postdoctoral researchers must hold an academic doctoral degree obtained after a successful doctoral defence.

Holders of an academic master's degree (or equivalent) are eligible under the category of non-doctoral researchers.

Under no circumstances may they carry out personal research aimed at obtaining a doctoral degree during the hours worked within the framework of this position.

Holders of an academic master's degree (or equivalent) or of a doctoral degree obtained after a successful defence are not eligible under the category of technicians.

It is the institution's responsibility to ensure that the qualification level of the employed staff is appropriately reflected in their remuneration in order to avoid any situation in which qualifications are exploited without adequate salary compensation.

For the research agreement covering years 1 and 2 of the research program, a deferral of the employment of staff planned but not effective at the start date of the agreement is allowed. This deferral, equivalent to the duration of the employment lost, may not exceed the end date of the agreement by more than 6 months. The duration of the employment initially granted may not be exceeded. The staff concerned will be dedicated to the FRFS-WEL-T program for the duration of their employment.

If a deferral has been granted for the research agreement covering years 1 and 2, the same deferral (duration and staff concerned) may also be applied under the same conditions to the agreement covering years 3 and 4.

The eligible **operating** expenses are the following:

- Consumables
- Costs for small scientific and technical equipment
- Costs for equipment³ maintenance and insurance
- Internal services
- Trainings
- Missions⁴
- Publications
- Overhead costs equals to 15% of the personnel costs and of the operating costs (except subcontracting costs and equipments); In accordance with the decree of the Walloon Government dated October 9, 2025, one third of the total budget for these overhead costs will be allocated by the University to the PI in order to cover expenses related to the research program.
- Subcontracting
- Software

The eligible expenses for **equipment** are the following:

- Acquisition cost of cutting-edge scientific equipment essential for scientific research
- Depreciation costs of scientific and technical equipment essential for scientific research

5. PROCEDURE AND EVALUATION CRITERIA (EX-ANTE EVALUATION)

The evaluation and the selection of programmes submitted under the FRFS-WEL-T INVESTIGATOR PROGRAMME 2026 follow several steps under the responsibility of the Scientific Commission. The procedure includes a priority ranking which is submitted to the Boards of Trustees (BoT) of the

³ Only equipment acquired with WEL-T funding

⁴ Missions carried out for research purposes by research staff having their remuneration partially or fully or not included in eligible expenses.

FRFS and of the WEL Research Institute. The FRFS BoT decides on the allocation of funding based on the proposals of the Governing Board of the WEL Research Institute.

The evaluation criteria are:

- the quality of the applicant;
- the quality of the programme;
- the focus on valorisation.

For researchers who received funding in the FRFS-WEL-T 2022 call:

- scientific results obtained;
- valorisation actions undertaken.

The criteria are detailed in the table at the end of [Appendix 2](#) of the regulation.

6. OPEN ACCESS POLICY

PIs are Investigators of the WEL Research Institute and members of the university and are required to mention their double affiliation in each of their publications or communications as follows:

** University name, University address, Belgium*

** WEL Research Institute, avenue Pasteur, 6, 1300 Wavre, Belgium*

Pursuant to the "Rules and [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", any scientific publication resulting partially or fully from the funding granted through an instrument of the call FRFS-WEL-T INVESTIGATOR PROGRAMME shall mention the source of this funding as follows:

This work was supported by the Walloon region through the Fonds de la Recherche Scientifique - FNRS for the FRFS-WEL-T under the funding [acronym of the instrument] [agreement or funding letter reference].

7. VALORISATION OF THE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

WEL Research Institute ensures, with the help of experts, the monitoring of research progresses, the respect of confidentiality, the detection of results with a valorisation potential, and the respect of the publication constraints necessary for the protection of intellectual property resulting from the Investigator programme.

The intellectual property of the results obtained within the framework of the research agreement is the exclusive property of the university of the French-Speaking Community of Belgium in which the research was carried out.

The valorisation of intellectual property is the responsibility of WEL Research Institute, which carries out this mission within the framework of a valorisation committee, comprising the university of the French-speaking Community of Belgium, represented by a representative from the university's Technology Transfer Office, the PI and WEL Research Institute.

The valorisation Committee can invite external people, subject to signature of a confidentiality agreement.

ALL DOCUMENTS, GUIDES AND REGULATIONS AND PRIVACY POLICY ARE AVAILABLE AT <https://www.frs-fnrs.be/en/reglements-guides> AND <https://www.frs-fnrs.be/en/charte-vie-privee>