

MINI GUIDE FRFS-WEL-T INVESTIGATOR PROGRAMME 2022



1. SCHEDULE

Opening of the call on the web-based application of the F.R.S.-FNRS [e-space](#) for the online submission: **THURSDAY 15TH DECEMBER 2022.**

FRFS-WEL-T CALL - INVESTIGATOR PROGRAMME 2022			
STEPS	RESPONSIBLE PERSONS/BODY	INSTRUMENT ¹	
		STARTING (STG)	ADVANCED (ADV)
DEADLINES FOR ELECTRONIC VALIDATION ²	PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR (PI)	Thursday, 9 February 2023 - 2pm	
	RECTOR	Thursday, 16 February 2023 - 2pm	
PROJECTS' ASSESSMENT STEPS	INDIVIDUAL ASSESSMENTS BY EXPERTS AND CONSOLIDATION BY THE SCIENTIFIC COMMISSION	March – June 2023	
INTERVIEWS OF STARTING CANDIDATES	SCIENTIFIC COMMISSION	12-13-14 June 2023*	
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS FRFS		June 2023	
START OF CONVENTION		1 October 2023	
END OF CONVENTION		30 September 2025 (30 September 2027 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 this date, no exceptions will be made.

2. SCOPE OF THE FRFS-WEL-T 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** asbl (WEL Research Institute)'s mission is to support excellence in strategic fundamental research within the scope of its departments and to promote the translation of scientific discoveries into benefits for our society.

WEL-T (Walloon Excellence in Technology) is a strategic axis of the FRFS and a department of the WEL Research Institute. It supports strategic research of excellence in engineering,

¹ See section "Characteristics of the instruments"

² All times are Brussels local time.

chemistry and physics with a view to developing breakthrough innovations for industrial applications aimed at sustainable transition.

Through the “**WEL-T Investigator Programme**” call, Wallonia grants significant resources over several years to WEL-T Investigators in support to ambitious research programmes that pave the road to new scientific breakthroughs. These programmes constitute a pillar of the WEL-T Investigators' laboratory and are flexible, allowing adaptation of the research scope over time as needed.

WEL-T Investigators must demonstrate a combination of scientific excellence, an awareness of unmet sustainable transition needs in their field, and a willingness to seek opportunities for application of their discoveries.

3. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INSTRUMENTS

The call WEL-T INVESTIGATOR PROGRAMME 2022 enables to apply for funding through 2 instruments:

➤ Starting

An application via the Starting instrument enables to apply for funding of a maximum of € 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 one year by childbirth and/or adoption.

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

➤ Advanced

An application via the Advanced instrument enables to apply for funding of a maximum of € 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-WEL-T call, regardless of their seniority.

The FRFS-WEL-T research programme spans a 4-year period. It is renewable every 4 years based on positive evaluation by the Scientific Commission. Each 4-year programme is 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-WEL-T and in the absence of serious ethical or productivity breaches (article 34 of the regulation).

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**³ are detailed in the table below:

Categories	Activity	
	Part time	Full time
Doctoral Researcher – Grant ⁴ or Salary	x ⁴	x
Postdoctoral Researcher ⁵	x	x
Non-doctoral Researcher – Salary	x	x
Technician - Salary	x	x

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.

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.

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, conduct any personal research work contributing to a Ph.D. degree during the working hours devoted to this function.

The host university shall determine the appropriate scheme (grant or salary) for the personnel listed in the proposed budget.

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

- Consumables

³ *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.*

Total personnel costs cannot be changed after application submission. However, if funding is granted, these may be adjusted if necessary in accordance with Article 23 of the Regulations.

⁴ *In case of a grant, the Doctoral Researcher must only be hired on a full-time basis.*

⁵ *The promoters 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.*

- Costs for small scientific and technical equipment
- Costs for equipment⁶ maintenance and insurance
- Internal services
- Trainings
- Missions⁷
- Overhead costs equals to 15% of the personnel costs and of the operating costs (except subcontracting costs and equipments)
- 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 FRFS-WEL-T INVESTIGATOR PROGRAMME 2022 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 FRFS and of 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 of the intellectual property.

The procedure and the evaluation criteria are detailed in the [Appendix 2](#) of the regulation.

6. OPEN ACCESS POLICY

The Board of Trustees of the F.R.S.-FNRS has decided to endorse the principle of Open access to publicly funded research. This support has led to the implementation of an institutional mandate providing Open access to publications from F.R.S.-FNRS funded research projects and researchers under the “Open Access Green Road” business model.

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”, 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 Grant(s) n° (agreement number).

PIs are WEL-T Investigators, affiliated to 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*

⁶ Only equipment acquired with WEL-T funding

⁷ Missions carried out for research purposes by research staff having their remuneration partially or fully or not included in eligible expenses.

7. RESULTS VALORISATION

WEL Research Institute ensures, with the help of its 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>

