

**RULES AND REGULATIONS**  
**« WELBIO INVESTIGATOR PROGRAMME » 2025**

**ADOPTED BY**  
**THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE FRFS**  
**ON 1<sup>st</sup> JULY 2025**

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## CHAPTER I: SCOPE

### Article 1

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 **WELBIO** (Walloon Excellence in Life Sciences and Biotechnology) 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 the life sciences, with a view to translate discoveries into industrial applications in all fields of medical, pharmaceutical and veterinary biotechnology. Through this funding instrument, Wallonia grants significant resources over several years to WELBIO Investigators within the WEL Research Institute to develop ambitious research programs 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 health-related needs in their field, and an understanding of the strategy required for translating their discoveries into practical applications which could be exploited on the market.

The Rules and Regulations hereinafter shall apply exclusively to applications submitted under the call WELBIO INVESTIGATOR PROGRAMME 2025, via the instruments referred to in article 2, which funds research programmes led by team leaders, also designated as principal investigator (PI).

### Article 2

In the present FRFS-WELBIO call, applications can be received through 2 instruments:

- Starting,
- Advanced.

The FRFS-WELBIO 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 WELBIO strategic axis and in the absence of serious ethical or productivity issues (article 34).

### Article 3

The research programme must be conducted within a university from the French-speaking Community of Belgium which have signed a collaboration agreement with the FRFS, the WEL Research Institute and the university to which the PI is related.

### Article 4

The PI is the responsible person for the scientific and administrative management of the funded research programme.

The PI is also an Investigator of the WEL Research Institute, based on the collaboration agreement mentioned at article 3.

## CHAPTER II: CANDIDACY

### II- A.: ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR THE PI

#### Article 5

The F.R.S.-FNRS ensures that the eligibility criteria are met.

The PI applicant should 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 validation deadline fixed for the academic authorities (rectors) to validate the application,
- Or a researcher-promoter who is an active fellow of an ongoing Ulysse Incentive Grant for Mobility in Scientific Research (MISU) 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:
  - To be permanently 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, that is 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2026 at the latest.

If the applicant accesses pension / professor emeritus status after the validation deadline fixed for the academic authorities (rectors), but before the end of the projected funding period, the submission of the application shall be subject to the prior approval by the Head of institution where the research will be carried out.

The applicant who accesses pension / professor emeritus status prior to the validation deadline fixed for the academic authorities (rectors) is not eligible<sup>1</sup>.

#### Article 6

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. :

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<sup>1</sup> This ineligibility criterion does not apply to PI applicants submitting an administrative reconduction after the first 2-year funding period (article 11 of this Regulation).

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 an additional 12 months for biological fathers ;
- an additional 12 months per adoption for adopting mothers and fathers.

This article does not apply to applicants who have been awarded a Starting Grant in a previous FRFS-WELBIO or FRFS-WEL-T call, regardless of their seniority.

#### Article 7

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-WELBIO 2021 call, and who meet the eligibility criteria set out in article 5 of this regulation, must indicate the type of the instrument obtained in the 2021 call: Advanced Grant or Starting Grant.

## **II- B.: CUMULATION RULE**

#### Article 8

The PI applicant may only submit a single application:

- Through the Starting instrument ;
- Through the Advanced instrument.

The FRFS-WELBIO programmes cannot be cumulated: a PI who obtained funding under the WELBIO INVESTIGATOR PROGRAMME 2023 call cannot apply under the present call. Nevertheless, the applicant who applied under the WELBIO INVESTIGATOR PROGRAMME 2023 call but did not obtain funding can resubmit an application under the present call. He/she will be asked to indicate how the project has been modified in light of the commission's feedback.

The FRFS-WELBIO and FRFS-WEL-T programmes cannot be cumulated; a PI who obtained funding under the WEL-T INVESTIGATOR PROGRAMME 2022 and 2024 calls cannot apply under the present call.

## **II- C.: ELIGIBILITY FOR APPLICATION AT THE CONCLUSION OF A WELBIO INVESTIGATOR PROGRAMME**

#### Article 9

The PI whose four-year programme is nearing the end of the reconduction research agreement (years 3 and 4) and who meets the eligibility criteria, may apply to the present call for proposals, subject to the present rules.

## II- D.: APPLICATION SUBMISSION

### Article 10

The FRFS-WELBIO call is launched following decision by the FRFS Board of Trustees, after receiving the proposals from the WEL Research Institute.

The opening of this call is published on the F.R.S.-FNRS website <https://www.frs-fnrs.be/> and on the WEL Research Institute website <https://welri.org/>.

Applications must be submitted in English and online via the e-space platform at <https://e-space.frs-fnrs.be/>.

It is expected to have full freedom to use the future intellectual property that could potentially be generated by the proposed programme. The proposed programme must be clearly distinct from any type of research projects for which the intellectual property of the results has already been negotiated with another party, and/or for which there is an expected financial return. The PI indicates in the application, with support from the TTO (Technology Transfer Office) of his/her university:

- If there are existing MTAs and/or industrial contracts (licence, collaboration, spin-off, other) ;
- The potential link with the proposed research programme;
- The potential constraint on the freedom to use any future intellectual property that could be generated by the proposed Investigator Programme (joint IP, right of first refusal, other)

As part of the evaluation criteria, the applicant must demonstrate an understanding of the strategy required for the protection of intellectual property which could emerge from the proposed programme and for its translation into practical applications which could be exploited on the market. The applicant is encouraged to consult with the TTO (Technology Transfer Office) of his/her university.

Completion of the application process requires two successive electronic validation steps by the deadlines indicated in the mini-guide:

- a. The validation by the PI applicant, accountable to the budget administration: this serves as a confirmation that the application file is complete.
- b. The validation by the academic authorities (rectors) of the academic institution to which the PI applicant is related and to which the application file is transferred once the PI applicant has given her/his confirmation. This authority may accept or decline the application and confirms all the information provided in the application for funding. This includes, with the advice of the TTO, the information related to valorisation and the potential impact of industrial contracts that would be in place (licence, collaboration, spin-off, other) on the freedom of valorisation of the future intellectual property that could be generated by the proposed Investigator Programme. The validation deadline fixed for the rectors puts a final end to the call for projects.

Applications that have not been validated within the time-frame of the call for projects will not be taken into consideration.

No additional information, amendments, or corrections of any kind will be accepted after the validation deadlines set for the PI applicant.

A mini-guide specifies the various deadlines.

## II- E.: ADMINISTRATIVE RECONDUCTION AFTER THE FIRST 2 YEARS OF THE PROGRAMME

### Article 11

The PI who is completing the first 2-year funding period of his/her four-year programme may submit an application for administrative reconduction for the second 2-year period. This application includes the updated budget for years 3 and 4, within the limits of the FRFS' financial resources for the WELBIO strategic axis.

The maximum total budget for years 3 and 4 is limited to the total granted for years 1 and 2.

The administrative reconduction application must be submitted in English and online on the e-space platform accessible at <https://e-space.frs-fnrs.be/>. Completion of the application process also involves two successive validation steps: by the PI applicant and by the academic authorities (rectors).

## CHAPTER III: INSTRUMENTS

### Article 12

The start and end dates of the Starting and Advanced instruments are indicated in the mini-guide.

### Article 13

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).

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).

### Article 14

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

- Personnel
- Operating
- Equipment

### Article 15

Categories of 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

The personnel is employed by the host institution.

The PI applicant 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.

#### Article 16

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 7<sup>th</sup> 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.

#### Article 17

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-WELBIO 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 duration of the staff employment requested must be for **at least one month** and may not exceed the maximal duration of the funding application, except in the case of a deferral of the hiring of staff as stipulated above. The identity of the personnel is not requested at the time of application, but the personnel category must be specified (see above). Curricula vitae of staff are not communicated to the members of the Scientific Commission.

#### Article 18

The eligible operating expenses are the following:

- Consumables

- Costs for small scientific and technical equipment
- Costs for equipment<sup>2</sup> maintenance and insurance
- Internal services
- Costs related to services by a university hospital partner
- Trainings
- Missions<sup>3</sup>
- Publications
- Overhead costs equals to 15% of the personnel costs and of the operating costs (except subcontracting costs and costs related to services by a university hospital eligible for VAT exemption)
- Subcontracting
- Software

Regarding services provided by a university clinic partner :

University hospitals, clinics or hospital departments, hereafter referred to as "CHU", provide specific services to university researchers to carry out projects funded by the F.R.S.-FNRS and its associated funds such as the FRFS.

To best use the funds allocated to scientific research, the F.R.S.-FNRS enables researchers to include, as research partners, the CHU actively participating in the research project provided that these partner institutions are considered as entities affiliated with the host university receiving the funding requested.

In this respect, the F.R.S.-FNRS enables the university to declare the costs strictly generated by the CHU to carry out the funded project. The university is responsible for the CHU's compliance to regulations applying to beneficiaries of F.R.S.-FNRS funding, as well as to relevant tax regulations.

To proceed, the researcher must imperatively detail in their application form:

- the tasks and work packages undertaken by the CHU (in the [template](#)),
- the budget required to conduct these tasks (under "Budget").

The researcher shall contact the relevant departments of their host university regarding the legal and financial regulations pertaining to this measure.

Please note: Are eligible only the hospitals, clinics or hospital departments affiliated with a university and listed in this [Appendix](#).

Article 19

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

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<sup>2</sup> Only equipment acquired with FRFS-WELBIO funding

<sup>3</sup> Missions carried out for research purposes by research staff having their remuneration partially or fully or not included in eligible expenses.

## Article 20

Team's staff, other than those whose remuneration is included in the proposed budget, may include:

- members of the teaching, scientific, administrative or technical staff pertaining to a university of the French-speaking Community of Belgium,
- members who benefit from a grant allocated by a Belgian or a foreign body promoting research.

No compensation can be granted to the PI or to the above-mentioned staff.

## **CHAPTER IV: APPLICATIONS EXAMINATION**

### Article 21

Evaluation procedure of the FRFS-WELBIO is detailed in [Appendix 2](#).

## **CHAPTER V: FINANCIAL PROVISIONS**

### Article 22

The funding granted is the subject of a research agreement concluded for a period of 2 years. This agreement may be subject to an administrative reconduction of 2 additional years in accordance with article 11 of this Regulation.

This agreement is signed by the following parties:

- **The principal investigator (PI)** commits to initiate and/or continue the subsidised research described in his/her programme;
- **The FRFS** commits to allocating grants covering the personnel costs, the operating and equipment costs, each year covered by the agreement;
- **The WEL Research Institute** ensures full compliance with the valorisation provisions mentioned in the research agreement;
- **The host institution** provides the necessary logistics but makes no commitment to take on this financial charge at the end of the research agreement.

The agreement provides unilateral termination clauses, which must be accompanied by notice clauses.

### Article 23

Grants allocated to the PI may cover personnel, operating and equipment costs. Each of these sections may include subsections.

Transfers between subsections of the same section are unrestricted. However, prior written approval of the FRFS is required for transfers between sections.

### Article 24

If the IP is authorised to recruit scientific and technical staff under his/her research agreement, these commitments may not exceed the duration of the agreement except in the case of a deferral of the appointment of staff as provided for in article 17. Such appointments shall be made in accordance with the salary scales and regulations in force within the host institution.

### Article 25

The financial participation of the FRFS is limited to the total amount mentioned in the research agreement.

#### Article 26

The grants may be carried over to the year following the one for which they are awarded within the limits of the research agreement period. Amounts not used at the end of the research agreement revert to the FRFS for the WELBIO strategic axis.

#### Article 27

At the end of the research agreement, after receipt of the supporting documents, the FRFS establishes a final account and proposes the decommitment of any unused budget.

The PI is always notified of this operation and should react as soon as possible if he/she wishes to make any changes to the final account.

#### Article 28

The grants made available to the PI are managed by the financial department of the institution to which they are attached.

The financial department of the institution sends the supporting documents to the F.R.S.-FNRS by the deadlines indicated in the research agreement.

### **CHAPTER VI: MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS**

#### Article 29

Any device or piece of equipment acquired with a credit from the FRFS for the WELBIO instrument becomes the property of the host institution, to which the credit recipient is attached.

The purchase of any device or piece of equipment 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 or piece of equipment at the disposal of the researchers involved for the time needed in order to pursue 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 FRFS.

In the event that the device or piece of equipment was purchased with the provision of an additional funding, the Board of Trustees of the FRFS will settle the ownership issue with the competent authorities.

#### Article 30

Given that grants are exclusively allocated for the execution of a research programme approved by the FRFS, PIs are required to use them solely for that purpose. Grants or any remaining budget will be recovered by the FRFS for the WELBIO strategic axis as soon as they are not used for this purpose anymore.

### **CHAPTER VII: RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF THE PI**

#### Article 31

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

### Article 32

PIs must submit to the rules imposed by the academic authority of the host institution where they work and observe its regulations. Regarding the FRFS funding instruments, PIs must also adhere to the [collaboration agreement](#) between the FRFS, the WEL Research Institute and the university to which the PI is related.

### Article 33

Throughout the duration of the research programme approved by the FRFS, the PI is forbidden to pursue any research for third parties on the subject of the research programme unless granted prior written approval from the FRFS is obtained.

### Article 34

The PI is required to submit annual administrative reports to the FRFS by the date specified in the research agreement.

The FRFS and the WEL Research Institute reserve the right to terminate the programme, at the time of administrative reconduction or at any other time, if ethical or productivity shortcomings are noted. In the event of a serious breach noticed by the WEL Research Institute or the FRFS, they shall inform each other. The WEL Research Institute may then refer the matter to the Scientific Commission for advice before informing the boards of trustees of the WEL Research Institute and FRFS. A PI's research programme can only be terminated after approval by both the WEL Research Institute and FRFS boards.

### Article 35

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 [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 through an instrument of the call FRFS-WELBIO 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-WELBIO under Grant(s) n° (agreement number).*

The PI guarantees the possibility of publishing their results to the researchers involved in his/her Investigator Programme.

## **CHAPTER VIII: VALORISATION OF THE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**

### Article 36

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.

Article 37

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.

Article 38

The valorisation of intellectual property is the responsibility of the 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 a representative of the WEL Research Institute.

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

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## APPENDIX 1: HOST INSTITUTIONS GIVING ACCESS TO THE FRFS FUNDING INSTRUMENTS

<p>Principal Investigator (PI)</p>	<p>➤ <b>Universities of the French-speaking Community of Belgium (CFB)</b></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>
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## APPENDIX 2: EVALUATION PROCEDURE OF THE WELBIO INVESTIGATOR PROGRAMME

### 1. THE SCIENTIFIC COMMISSION

The evaluation follows several steps under the responsibility of the Scientific Commission that lead to a priority ranking which is submitted to the Boards of Trustees of the FRFS and the WEL Research Institute. The Board of Trustees of the FRFS decides on the allocation of funding based on the proposals of the Governing Board of the WEL Research Institute.

The Scientific Commission is composed of 14 to 17 members, including:

- 7 to 9 internationally recognized scientific experts in the fields of life sciences and located outside Belgium or at least outside of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation;
- 2 or 3 experts in the valorisation of scientific results (e.g. KTO, industry members, ...) competent in the theme and located outside Belgium or at least outside the Wallonia-Brussels Federation. An expert in valorisation can come from the same institution as a scientific expert, as their roles are different.
- 5 observers from the universities of the French-speaking Community of Belgium. They have a purely consultative role; they cannot vote nor act as (co-) rapporteurs.

The composition of the Scientific Commission is proposed to the Board of Trustees of the FRFS by the Board of Directors of the WEL Research Institute and by the Support Committee of the F.R.S.-FNRS competent in the topic and extended to include members of the WEL Research Institute Scientific Council competent in the topic.

The composition of the Scientific Commission is published on the F.R.S.-FNRS website <https://www.frs-fnrs.be/> and the WEL Research Institute website <https://welri.org/>.

### 2. EVALUATION CRITERIA

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-WELBIO 2021 call:

- scientific results obtained;
- valorisation actions undertaken.

These criteria are detailed in the table at the end of Appendix 2.

### 3. PROPOSALS EVALUATION

#### 3.1 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The principle of a two-step procedure has been adopted: individual evaluations by experts of the first step, followed by a consolidation within the Scientific Commission to draw up the final ranking.

During the first step, the proposals are reviewed by several experts. Each expert works individually and remotely through e-space and evaluates the proposal according to the evaluation criteria detailed in the table at the bottom of the Appendix 2.

An expert may be asked to evaluate several proposals, but is not asked to rank them, as each proposal should be evaluated independently. A marking grid of the proposals is provided in section 3.3, with the intention to standardise the grading system.

The names of the experts linked to a proposal remain undisclosed.

#### 3.2 EXPERTS APPOINTMENT CONDITIONS AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The FRFS shall send a letter of appointment to each selected expert, whether they are an individual reviewer or a member of a Scientific Commission. This letter constitutes an agreement between the FRFS and the expert, specifying the precise terms and conditions for the expert: it imposes respect of a code of conduct and lays down essential regulations in terms of confidentiality. It includes the description of tasks s/he is entrusted with, as well as the conditions of allowance or payment and reimbursement of expenses.

Confidentiality: The reviewers and members of the Scientific Commission, including the observers from the universities of the French-speaking Community of Belgium, sign a confidentiality agreement which strictly bind them to the secrecy of all written and oral information related to the evaluation process.

Conflict of interest: Based on information provided by the experts, the FRFS makes every effort to avoid conflict of interest with regard to the files that these experts will be invited to review. To that end, experts must sign a declaration stating that there is no conflict of interest at the time of the appointment and that they commit to informing the FRFS in case where such a conflict would arise during the fulfilment of their tasks.

#### 3.3 PROPOSALS GRADING SYSTEM

The experts (both individual experts and members of the Scientific Commissions) examine the proposals for each evaluation criterion and give them an overall rating according to the following scale:

Category	Grade	
A	A+	outstanding
	A	excellent
	A-	very good
B	B+	good

Category	Grade	
	B	average
	B-	weak
C	C	insufficient

### **3.4 STEP 1 - INDIVIDUAL EVALUATIONS**

#### **Experts selection**

- Potential experts registered on e-space are identified according to their field of expertise, based on the descriptor fields selected that they may, if necessary, complete with unrestricted keywords and on the programme.
- The applicant indicates up to 5 experts he/she does not wish to have as reviewer for reasons of a potential conflict of interest.
- For each proposal, the potential experts confirm whether or not they are competent to assess the programme based on the title and on the summary of the programme. They also confirm that they do not face a potential conflict of interest with regards to the evaluation of the given proposal.
- The President of the Scientific Commission validates step 1 experts assignment performed by the F.R.S.-FNRS administration for the FRFS.

#### **Individual evaluation procedure**

- The programmes are assessed by at least 2 scientific experts.
- The experts of a given proposal work individually, drawing up an evaluation report for that proposal using the electronic form provided.
- The individual evaluation report of the expert cannot be subsequently changed.

### **3.5 STEP 2 – CONSOLIDATION WITHIN THE SCIENTIFIC COMMISSION**

#### Starting applications

The Starting candidates are pre-selected by the Scientific Commission for an interview.

To carry out the pre-selection, the Scientific Commission takes into consideration the evaluation criteria specified in point 2 of the present Appendix and the individual evaluations received from remote experts (step 1 of the evaluation process).

The dates reserved for the interviews are listed in the mini-guide. 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.

#### Advanced applications

Advanced candidates are evaluated on the basis of their application and on the individual evaluations of the first-step experts in accordance with the criteria mentioned in point 2 of the present Appendix.

#### **Role of the rapporteurs, co-rapporteurs and observers**

The proposals are assigned to a single "rapporteur" who is assisted by "co-rapporteurs" for the task.

- The rapporteur shall prepare the work and the debates of the Scientific Commission, through the elaboration of a consolidated evaluation draft report, based on individual evaluations. The draft report will afterwards be reviewed by the Scientific Commission.
- Co-rapporteurs are not required to write an evaluation report but will be invited to express his/her opinion during the meeting of the Scientific Commission to bring a complementary perspective or a different point of view which will be included in the evaluation report by the rapporteur.
- Observers are neither rapporteurs nor co-rapporteurs. They do not take part in the Scientific Commission's discussions but may answer any questions the Commission may have.

#### **Responsibility of the Scientific Commission**

- The Scientific Commission shall establish for each instrument (Starting and Advanced) a consolidated ranking of the proposals and budget recommendations and shall submit this ranking to the Governing Board of the WEL Research Institute and the Board of Trustees of the FRFS.
- The Scientific Commission is responsible for the final evaluation report which will be sent to the applicant.

## **4. NOTIFICATION OF THE FUNDING DECISION**

The funding decision (granting or rejection) is within the competence of the Board of Trustees of the FRFS based on the proposals of the Governing Board of the WEL Research Institute.

The funding decision and budget granted are notified in writing to the applicant by the F.R.S.-FNRS Secretary-General and the General Manager of the WEL Research Institute.

The administrative staff of the F.R.S.-FNRS shall communicate to the applicants:

- the final evaluation report by the Scientific Commission and,
- the evaluation reports by the first-step individual experts on an anonymous basis.

**EVALUATION CRITERIA**  
**WELBIO INVESTIGATOR PROGRAMME CALL**

<p><b>QUALITY OF THE APPLICANT</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Adequacy between the level of education and experience of the applicant to carry out the programme proposed.</li> <li>➤ International visibility/recognition.</li> <li>➤ Productivity: number and quality of the publications considering the size of the team and the grants already obtained.</li> <li>➤ For Starting researchers holding a Ph.D. for 12 years maximum: scientific independence of the applicant.</li> <li>➤ Other...</li> </ul>
<p><b>QUALITY OF THE PROGRAMME</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Does the programme address an important issue?</li> <li>➤ Scientific originality: Does the project include new concepts or approaches? Are the objectives original and innovative? Does the project question established paradigms?</li> <li>➤ The proposed programme must be able to deliver quantifiable technological results and quantifiable products</li> <li>➤ Technical originality, use of new technologies.</li> <li>➤ Questions to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the programme hypothesis-based?</li> <li>• Is the programme properly planned and feasible?</li> <li>• Is the experimental approach appropriate?</li> <li>• Is the programme based on preliminary results of quality?</li> <li>• Are limitations and alternatives appropriately identified and discussed?</li> <li>• Is the presentation clear?</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ Adequacy between the proposed budget and the objectives of the programme.</li> <li>➤ Other...</li> </ul>
<p><b>FOCUS ON VALORISATION AND RELEVANCE TO THE OBJECTIVES OF THE WELBIO STRATEGIC AXIS</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Relevance to the objectives of the WELBIO strategic axis (fundamental research in life sciences for an impact in health).</li> <li>➤ Programmes focusing on modelling must indicate how they will move from in silico studies to devices and technologies that can have a beneficial societal impact and be exploited on the market</li> <li>➤ Awareness of unmet health-related needs in the field of the proposed research programme, as well as application opportunities.</li> <li>➤ Understanding of the strategy required for the protection of intellectual property which could emerge from the proposed programme and for its translation into practical applications which could be exploited on the market.</li> <li>➤ If industrial and/or MTA contracts have been put in place, is there an impact on the freedom to use the future intellectual property that could emerge from the proposed programme?</li> <li>➤ The foreseen application(s) that could emerge from the proposed programme should be ethical and for the benefit of society.</li> </ul>

**EVALUATION CRITERIA**  
**WELBIO INVESTIGATOR PROGRAMME CALL**

**For researchers who already have benefited from a funding during the FRFS-WELBIO 2021 call :**

**SCIENTIFIC RESULTS  
ACHIEVED**

- Do the publications over the last 5 years meet expectations?

**CONCRETE ACTIONS  
CARRIED OUT FOR A  
POTENTIAL VALORISATION  
OF THE RESULTS OF THE  
PREVIOUS WELBIO  
PROGRAMME**

- Have any concrete actions been taken to explore opportunities for application and/or to implement valorisation of results?
- Are the actions taken towards the valorisation of intellectual property convincing?

## ANNEXE 3 : F.R.S.-FNRS LIST OF THE HOSPITALS AND UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL'S DEPARTMENTS

<p><b><u>Hôpitaux et services hospitaliers universitaires rattachés à l'UCLouvain / UCLouvain Hospitals and University hospital's departments</u></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ CLINIQUES UNIVERSITAIRES SAINT-LUC</li> <li>➤ CLINIQUES UNIVERSITAIRES MONT-GODINNE</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Hôpitaux et services hospitaliers universitaires rattachés à l'ULB / ULB Hospitals and University hospital's departments</u></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ HÔPITAL ERASME</li> <li>➤ INSTITUT JULES BORDET</li> <li>➤ CHU BRUGMANN : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service de médecine (comprend aussi la dermatologie)</li> <li>• Service de chirurgie</li> <li>• Service de gériatrie</li> <li>• Service de psychiatrie</li> <li>• Service de revalidation physique</li> <li>• Service d'anesthésie</li> <li>• Service d'hospitalisation chirurgicale de jour</li> <li>• Service de biologie clinique</li> <li>• Service d'imagerie médicale</li> <li>• Service de médecine nucléaire</li> <li>• Service d'hospitalisation non chirurgicale de jour</li> <li>• Service d'anatomie pathologique</li> <li>• Service d'immuno-hématologie-transfusion</li> <li>• Service des soins intensifs</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ HUDERF : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service de pédiatrie comprend toutes les cliniques spécialisées liées à la pédiatrie (cardiologie, endocrinologie, gastro-entérologie, diabétologie, néphrologie, douleurs et soins palliatifs, pneumologie, néonatalogie, soins intensifs et urgence, nutrition et maladies métaboliques, cancéro-hématologie, neurologie)</li> <li>• Service de psychiatrie infanto-juvénile</li> <li>• Service de chirurgie cardiaque et pédiatrique</li> <li>• Service d'anesthésiologie</li> <li>• Laboratoire de biologie clinique</li> <li>• Service d'anatomie pathologique</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service de dermatologie</li> <li>➤ CHU SAINT-PIERRE :</li> <li>• Service de diagnostic et traitement chirurgical comprenant : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Service de chirurgie digestive</li> <li>- Service d'orthopédie</li> <li>- Service de chirurgie vasculaire et thoracique</li> <li>- Clinique de chirurgie réparatrice</li> <li>- Service d'urologie</li> <li>- Service de stomatologie et chirurgie maxillo-faciale</li> <li>- Service d'ORL</li> <li>- Service d'ophtalmologie</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Service de diagnostic et de traitement médical comprenant : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Service des soins intensifs</li> <li>- Service de pneumologie</li> <li>- Service de gastro-entérologie</li> <li>- Service de neurologie</li> <li>- Service d'hématologie-oncologie</li> <li>- Service d'endocrinologie</li> <li>- Service de médecine physique</li> <li>- Service de revalidation cardio-pneumo</li> <li>- Service de dermatologie</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Programme de soins « patient gériatrique » comprenant : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Service de gériatrie</li> <li>- Service de psycho-gériatrie</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Service des maladies contagieuses</li> <li>• Service des maladies infantiles comprenant : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Service de pédiatrie</li> <li>- Service de néonatalogie</li> <li>- Service de pédo-psychiatrie</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Service d'anesthésiologie-réanimation</li> <li>• Service des urgences</li> <li>• Service de gynécologie-obstétrique comprenant : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Service de gynécologie</li> <li>- Service d'obstétrique</li> <li>- Clinique de sénologie</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Service « pathologies cardiaques » comprenant : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Service de cardiologie</li> <li>- Service de chirurgie cardiaque</li> <li>- Service de revalidation cardia-pneumo</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Laboratoire de biologie clinique LHUB</li> </ul>
<p><b>Hôpitaux et services hospitaliers universitaires</b></p>	<p>➤ CHU LIÈGE</p>

**rattachés à l'ULiège /**  
*ULiège Hospitals and  
University hospital's  
departments*

➤ C.H.R. DE LA CITADELLE

- Service d'anatomie pathologique + dermatopathologie
- Service d'anesthésie et réanimation
- Service de chirurgie cardio-vasculaire
- Service de gynécologie-obstétrique
- Service d'hématologie clinique
- Service de neurologie
- Service de néonatalogie
- Service de pédiatrie

➤ CENTRE HOSPITALIER DU BOIS DE L'ABBAYE ET DE HESBAYE - SITE SERAING

- Service de gynécologie-sénologie-obstétrique