

Guidelines for Applicants

Québec-Flanders Bilateral Research Cooperation Program

The Research Foundation - Flanders (FWO)
The Fonds de recherche de Québec - Nature et Technologies (FRQNT)
The Fonds de recherche du Québec - Santé (FRQS)
The Fonds de recherche du Québec - Société et Culture (FRQSC)

*** FRQNT, FRQS and FRQSC can be referred jointly as FRQ.

This document describes the procedures for the present Call of the Québec-Flanders Bilateral Research Cooperation Program.

1. Introduction

As science becomes increasingly global and complex, many research questions cannot be addressed without international collaboration between scientists from different scientific areas. Thereby, Québec and Flanders decided to invest in a Bilateral Research Cooperation Program (hereafter referred as the “Program”) to create cooperative leverage for scientific excellence.

This program is implemented through a joint call for proposals (hereafter referred as the “Call”), launched jointly in Québec and Flanders. Each proposal should involve at least one team consisting of at least two researchers from Québec and one similar team from Flanders. **Applicants are expected to propose coherent interdisciplinary research projects covering research domains falling under at least two of the three Quebec Research Funds (FRQNT, FRQS or FRQSC), in which the added value of the collaboration, and the complementarity between partners, is clearly shown.**

For the Fonds de recherche du Québec, interdisciplinary research is an approach that involves the coordination and integration of several fields and sectors focused on a specific research problem, subject or issue, ideally without a hierarchy of the knowledge systems. It is therefore not simply the joining or juxtaposition of different fields and sectors. Rather, interdisciplinarity must be reflected on three levels: 1) in the design and development of the problem to jointly put forward common or shared research questions; 2) in the development of an *ad hoc* methodology that is adapted to each problem and which integrates each sector’s approaches; 3) in the composition of the research team: researchers in at least two sectors must be included in the research team.

The research should be carried out both in Québec and in Flanders. **The duration of the projects is for a maximum of three years.**

Project proposals will be received **until May 15th 2017** (5 PM CEST). Flemish applicants are subject to the general regulations on FWO research projects. Québec applicants are subject to the [FRQ Common General Rules](#).

2. Objectives

The Program aims to contribute to the development and the excellence of Québec-Flanders universities and scientific cooperation in selected topics. It also aims to foster interdisciplinary research covering research domains falling under at least two of the three Quebec Research Funds (FRQNT, FRQS or FRQSC). The following scientific topics are eligible:

- **Demographic changes and healthy aging** (aspects related to issues with an ageing population)
- **Safe, clean and efficient energy** (all aspects of renewable energy: advanced technologies, green energy, socio-economic and health related aspects, change in practices)
- **Sea & inland waterways governance/valorization** (maritime industry, import / export, socio-economic aspects related to marine transportation)
- **Food science** (nutrition, agri-food sciences, food safety, sustainable food production, bio-economy, and eating habits)
- **Climate change** (socio-economic studies, impact on health, living with environmental changes, bio-economy...)
- **Urban development** (Smart and livable cities; ecological, technological, humane, and futuristic aspects)

3. Guidelines for applicants

3.1 Eligible applicants

In Québec

- This call is open to:
 - o **FRQNT researchers:** *For Principal Investigator and co-researchers (regular member of the team):* university researchers (CHU, CHUN), college researchers (CHC) or institutional researchers (CE). *For collaborators (can participate but cannot receive funding):* All status cited above as well as affiliated researchers (CHA), researchers with no recognized institutional affiliation (CHS), researchers from outside Québec (CHH), government researchers (CHG), industrial researchers (CHI), collaborating researchers (COL) and guest researchers (VIS) may be included in the team but cannot receive funding.
 - o **FRQSC researchers:** *For Principal Investigator:* university researchers (CHU, CHUN). *For co-researcher (regular member of the team):* university researchers (CHU, CHUN, CRU, CRUN), college researchers (CHC) or institutional researchers (CE). *For collaborators (can participate but cannot receive funding):* All status cited above as well as affiliated researchers (CHA), research practitioner (PC), Collaborating practitioner (COP), government researchers (CHG), industrial researchers (CHI), researchers with no recognized institutional affiliation (CHS), researchers from outside Québec (CHH), collaborating researchers (COL) and guest researchers (VIS).
 - o **FRQS researchers:** *For Principal Investigator or co-researcher (regular member of the team):* independent investigators and independent clinical investigators. College researcher maybe included as collaborating researchers in the team.
- For a definition of each status, consult the [FRO Common General Rules](#).
- The researchers have to be Canadian citizens or permanent residents (permanent resident card).

In Flanders

Eligible are those researchers that comply with <http://www.fwo.be/en/fellowships-funding/research-projects/research-project/regulations-for-research-projects/>.

Concretely:

- Your research will be carried out under the supervision of an applicable Flemish host institution ([article 3 of the regulations for research project](#))
- Your research project will be carried out under the direction of a supervisor, and minimum one co-supervisor.
- The host institution is the employer of staff remunerated under research projects.

3.2 Proposal eligibility criteria

- The proposal covers one or several of the selected topics mentioned in the Section 2 Objectives.
- The proposal involves minimum two research teams, one in Québec and one in Flanders.
 - o In Flanders, a research team is composed of minimum two researchers, including the Principal Investigator [PI] (also called supervisor) and another researcher of at least postdoctoral level (co-supervisor).
 - o In Québec, a research team is composed of minimum two researchers, including the Principal Investigator [PI] (also called supervisor) and another researcher of any of the status indicated above in 3.1 as a regular member (co-supervisor).
 - o **Attention:** in order to be eligible, there must be a principal investigator and a co-investigator included on both the Flemish and the Québec teams.
- The proposal is designed jointly by a Québec and a Flemish research team(s) and needs to be submitted by the Flemish PI at FWO using the [online E-loket](#) before the deadline (May 15th 2017).
- In order to promote interdisciplinarity, the proposal covers research sectors falling under at least two of the three Quebec Research Funds. More precisely, the members of the Quebec and Flanders teams must cover research domains falling under at least two of the three Quebec Research Funds.
 - 1) Health sciences ([Domains covered by FRQS](#))
 - 2) Social and human sciences, arts and letters ([Domains covered by FRQSC](#))
 - 3) Natural sciences, mathematics and engineering ([Domains covered by FRQNT](#))
- A researcher may participate in only one project submitted under this Call.

3.3 Submission of application

3.3.1 The form

One joint application form has to be completed. The form is available on the FWO website through the digital platform 'E-loket' and needs to be submitted before May 15th 2017. **No submission is necessary in Québec.** The information in the application form can be shared with the other teams by extracting PDF files from the application. This means that all information regarding the Québec research team and the budget requested (in CAD) by this team needs to be included in the online application form submitted at FWO.

3.3.2 The CVs

To verify conflict of interest, all (co-)PIs, both from Flanders and Québec, have to fill in an electronic CV including an updated list of publications in the digital platform '[E-loket](#)' before the deadline.

Each Québec team member, including the PI, must also upload a complete Canadian Common CV to the application form.

A short CV (max. 1 page) of all Flemish (co-)PIs including 5 key peer reviewed publications that are representative for his/her career need to be uploaded to the application form.

3.4 Eligible expenses

The Québec part of the project budget can only be used for one or more of the following cost categories as described in the [FRQ Common General Rules](#):

- Compensation, Training and Professional Fees
- Travel and Subsistence Costs for Quebec researchers going to Flanders
- Materials, Supplies and Equipment
- Computer Supplies, Telecommunications and Data Banks
- Dissemination of Research Outcomes, Reproduction, Publishing, Reprography or Translation

Please note that the Québec side of each application can receive up to 100 000 \$CAN per year for three years.

The Flemish part of the project budget can only be used for one or more of the following cost categories as described in [Articles 16-22 of the FWO Regulations for Research Projects](#):

- Scientific staff and consumables
- Equipment
- Travel and accommodation costs of Flemish researchers going to Québec
- Production costs of joint publications

In the frame of this bilateral collaboration with FRQ the **budget for staff and consumables on the Flemish side** is minimally 45.000 EUR and **maximally 75.000 EUR annually per project**. In case one of the project partners requests only funding for consumables, the lower limit for this partner is set at 20.000 EUR. For equipment a maximum of 150.000 EUR in the first year can be applied for with matching funding also up to 150.000 EUR.

3.5. Application timeline

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|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| - May 15 th , 2017 | Deadline for proposals |
| - May-November, 2017 | Eligibility check and peer review |
| - November-December, 2017 | Joint scientific committee |
| - December 2017 | Announcement |
| - January 1 st , 2018 | Start of the projects |

4. Evaluation

4.1 Evaluation procedure

The process will be divided in two steps:

- a. The FRQ and the FWO will have each of the applications peer-reviewed by international external experts.
- b. The FRQ and the FWO will nominate a joint scientific evaluation committee. This committee, will compare the applications and establish a ranking separating them in three categories:
 - i. Proposal with the highest score, to be funded with the highest priority to the extent that the budget allows it
 - ii. Proposals with a score above the scientific excellence cut-off point, to be funded if the budget allows it (*reserve list*)
 - iii. Proposals with a score below the scientific excellence cut-off point, not to be funded

4.2 Evaluation criteria

1) Quality of the project

- Scientific quality
- Methodology
- Originality and innovative nature of the project
- Pertinence of the project interdisciplinarity (as defined in the introduction)

2) Impact of the project

- Purposefulness of the project, dissemination, knowledge transfer and visibility
- Impact on the training of highly qualified personnel

3) Quality of the team

- International scientific level of the research groups
- Complementarity/synergy between researchers regarding the selected topic and articulation of the interdisciplinarity
- Added value of the international collaboration
- Balanced distribution between Flemish and Québec researchers

4) Organisation and management

- Quality of the planning
- Feasibility of the project
- Efficient use of existing resources
- Necessity for the budgeted resources

4.3 Integrity of the evaluation process

For the external peer review, the applicants will be asked, through the electronic form, to provide a list of ten potential reviewers (called referees in the FWO regulations), which they declare to have no

conflicts of interest with. That is, all suggested reviewers should comply with the eligibility criteria as defined in [the regulations for external referees](#). If the proposed reviewers do not comply with the eligibility criteria, the application will be declared ineligible. **Reviewers should come from outside Québec and Belgium and have no conflict of interest with the both the Flemish and Québec team members. As the projects are interdisciplinary, it is important to supply names of reviewers that can cover the different sectors.**

The FRQ and FWO Board of director members are not involved in the scientific evaluation of funding applications, and at no time may researchers, students or institutional authorities make contact with the evaluation committee chairperson or members. The agencies have the right to withdraw an application from competition if there is any attempt to lobby the committee or sway the evaluation process.

Every person recruited to sit on an evaluation committee must comply with standard rules of confidentiality regarding the application packages, committee makeup, deliberations and recommendations. The evaluation committee chairperson, members and outside experts are required to disclose any conflicts of interest and must sign a written statement in this regard. For Quebec reviewers, refer to the [FRQ Common General Rules](#).

5. Intellectual properties

The applicants shall address the intellectual property rights resulting from research conducted under the Bilateral Research Cooperation Program, on a case by case basis, by taking into account the intellectual contribution of each participant to the research. For Québec applicants, the management of their intellectual property rights shall be conducted in accordance with the [FRQ Common General Rules](#) and in accordance with the affiliated institutions' internal policy on intellectual property. For Flemish applicants, the management of their intellectual property rights shall be conducted in accordance with [Article 2 of the General Regulations](#).

6. Financial commitment

Both the FRQ and FWO commit to contribute the equivalent of 400 000 \$ CAN (FRQ) and 300 000 € (FWO) per year for this Call. The FRQ and FWO strive to fund around four projects in this current call. FWO will only fund the Flemish part of the project. FRQ will only fund the Québec part of the project.

The FRQ receives annual credits from the Québec government to fund its grant programs. It then undertakes annual commitments, conditional on the availability of funds.

7. Applicants commitment

In accepting the grant, applicants agree to comply with all the terms and conditions stipulated in the Call and the general regulation of funding agencies that support them. It is the responsibility of the candidate to be aware of these terms and conditions.

Besides the clauses specific to their funding organization, in accepting the grant, the team will:

- Submit to FRQ and FWO a final research report. FRQ and FWO will contact their respective awardees to inform them on the form it has to take.
- Mention in any report, article or communication the funding organization supporting the project (FRQ and FWO).

8. Contact information

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