

OPERATION OF THE RCUK/ FNR LEAD AGENCY AGREEMENT

SECTION 1 – GENERIC GUIDANCE

Background

1. Research Councils UK (RCUK) and the Fonds National de la Recherche Luxembourg (FNR) are charged with fostering and supporting academic research within their own communities in their respective countries. They recognise that the best research in all countries may be delivered by working with the best researchers internationally.
2. To this end the FNR and RCUK have signed a Statement of Intent (SoI) in order to welcome, encourage and support collaborative applications that may cut across their national boundaries and involve international collaborative teams.
3. The SoI provides for a ‘Lead Agency Agreement’ whereby RCUK will receive and assess collaborative proposals from eligible applicants in both countries on behalf of both organisations.
4. The selection processes, as a whole, remain a process of the applicable UK Research Council. FNR agrees in principle to accept the results of the peer review process and to fund the Luxembourg component of successful applications, in accordance with their existing financial processes and procedures.
5. Due to their respective different modes of funding and procedures, individual UK Research Councils take differing approaches to the implementation of the Agreement; these are summarised in Section 2. Details of schemes open to applicants can also be found in section 2. RCUK is committed to the Agreement and each Research Council will periodically review its implementation with a view to streamlining and harmonising as far as possible.
6. FNR and RCUK have agreed that the Lead Agency Agreement will principally apply to RCUK’s ‘responsive mode’ schemes. However, under the terms of this agreement it is also envisaged that FNR may agree to co-fund proposals submitted in response to particular UK Research Council targeted calls. Where this is the case this will be agreed in advance by both funding agencies and will be clearly advertised in the relevant call for proposals and associated guidance.
7. It is important to note that the Agreement does not represent a separate stream of funding, but enables Luxembourg/ UK collaborative proposals to be submitted to existing RCUK competitions.

Eligible Applications

8. Applications are welcomed in any single or cross-disciplinary area which fits within the remit of FNR and one or more of the UK Research Councils. Details on the remits

of the UK Research Councils can be found at: <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/research/areas/>. Details of schemes to which applicants can apply can be found in section 2 below, these may be either responsive mode schemes (covering all areas of Research Council remit) or through targeted calls.

9. Interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary applications which cross the remit of more than one of the UK Research Councils will be processed according to the RCUK cross-Council funding agreement. Further details can be found at: <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/funding/FundingAgreement/>
10. Applications can be made from any institution(s) eligible for RCUK funding (researchers based in RCUK research institutes should check their eligibility with the relevant Research Council). Information on eligibility for RCUK funding can be found at <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/funding/eligibilityforrcs/> or in the guidance notes of the relevant scheme for each Research Council.
11. In order to benefit from FNR funding, Luxembourg applicants need to be from FNR eligible institutions, i.e. public research centres, the University of Luxembourg and public bodies, departments and establishments in Luxembourg with an authorisation to undertake research in their areas of competence.

Submission of applications

12. RCUK will accept applications via the Joint Electronic System (Je-S). There are some differences in the Je-S format between Councils and applicants should ensure that they follow the relevant guidelines and requirements for the individual Council covering the remit of their research.

Costing of proposals

13. Costs for the UK based researcher should be requested by completing the relevant finance fields of the Je-S form. Costs being requested from FNR for Luxembourg based investigators should not be entered into these fields.
14. All costs being requested from RCUK must be eligible under normal Research Funding Rules.
15. The Luxembourg applicants should include a Consolidated Budget form and justification form (for the costs being requested from FNR) in the proposal being submitted to RCUK.

Template forms are available under <http://www.fnr.lu/en/Research-Programmes/Research-Programmes/INTER-Programme>.

<https://www.fnr.lu/international-cooperation/rcuk/> The completed forms should be provided to the UK applicants to be uploaded as attachments to the Je-S form.

16. All costs requested from FNR should be eligible under the general rules and procedures for FNR research grants <https://www.fnr.lu/international-cooperation/rcuk/> (INTER Application Guidelines). In general terms, costs which can be claimed from FNR can include:
 - Personnel
 - Equipment
 - Consumables
 - Travel

- Other costs
- Overhead

Processing of applications

17. Applications will be submitted to the relevant UK Research Council for processing. The UK Research Council will lead on the processing and assessment of the application on behalf of both organisations. By submitting the application, all applicants and individuals named on the application agree that any personal information on that proposal can be shared with officers of FNR and nominated experts. FNR agrees to treat such information in confidence and according to UK Data protection rules, as well as any other law applicable to the protection of intellectual property rights.
18. On receipt of the application the UK Research Council will forward a copy of the completed application to FNR, for eligibility checks, confirmation of the availability of funds should the proposal be recommended for funding and, if required, the suggestion of peer reviewers. These will be sent to FNR within two weeks of acceptance by the relevant Research Council. FNR will complete eligibility checks and may forward names of peer reviewers for consideration within a further two weeks.
19. Once these have been completed the UK applicants will be notified whether the application has been accepted for processing. The UK Research Council will approach the relevant number of peer reviewers according to normal scheme rules and procedures. It is anticipated that reviews will be obtained from a minimum of three reviewers, unless the scheme involves a streamlined assessment process.
20. Once peer reviews are completed the proposals will be submitted to the decision-making/advisory body of the UK Research Council. The proposals will be sent to FNR in advance of the RCUK panel meeting and a FNR nominee/ representative may be able to observe the decision-making process either via correspondence or in person depending on the nature of the scheme, and the number and value of proposals received.

Criteria of Assessment

21. RCUK funds research on a competitive basis employing independent expert peer review. This system is regarded as an international benchmark of excellence in research funding, and this provides a guarantee of the quality of UK research.
22. The actual criteria of assessment will depend on the individual UK Research Council and scheme to which the application is made. These are normally detailed in the relevant scheme applicant guidance notes.

Announcement of Decisions/ Issuing of Awards

23. The relevant UK Research Council will notify FNR once a decision has been made. Under the terms of the Agreement FNR agrees in principle to accept the results of the peer review process as presented by the relevant UK Research Council.
24. In case of a negative funding decision, the relevant UK Research Council will issue a decision letter to the UK applicant on behalf of both organisations. A copy of this letter

will be sent to FNR. It is not necessary to wait for the FNR confirmation of the decision.

25. In case of a positive funding decision , FNR will confirm funding and agree award start dates with the UK Research Council.
26. Once the UK Research Council has confirmation from FNR they will then issue a decision letter to the UK applicant on behalf of both organisations. A copy of this letter will be sent to FNR. This will confirm the proposed start date and state that FNR will be in contact with the Luxembourg partner about issuing an award for the Luxembourg component of the project.
27. The UK Research Council will issue an award for the UK component to the UK applicant's institution according to normal processes and procedures.
28. The FNR will issue an award for the LU component to the LU applicant's institution according to normal processes and procedures.

Post Award Management

29. Award holders should contact both FNR and the funding UK Research Council concerning any changes to any of the award holders' institutional affiliations or other aspects of the grant during its life-time. If necessary, the funding UK Research Council and FNR may consult with each other before agreeing any changes to the grant's status. This will normally be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Progress and Final Reports

Where these are required by the UK Research Council/ FNR they will be submitted according to the normal procedures of those organisations. The required reports will cover the development of the whole project (and not only of the national party). Any additional requirements for reporting on the effectiveness of the international cooperation will be detailed in the relevant Research Council's and FNR's guidelines for applicants.

Intellectual Property

30. It is the responsibility of the Research Organisation, and all engaged in the research, to make every reasonable effort to ensure that the outcomes obtained in the course of the research, whether patentable or not, are used to the advantage of society and the economy. Research outcomes should be disseminated to both research and more widespread audiences - for example to inform potential users and beneficiaries of the research.
31. Unless stated otherwise, the ownership of intellectual property, and responsibility for its exploitation, rests with the organisation that generates it. Where the grant is associated with more than one research organisation and/or other project partners, the basis of collaboration between the organisations, including ownership of intellectual property and rights to exploitation, is expected to be set out in a formal collaboration agreement. It is the responsibility of the Research Organisation to put such an agreement in place before the research begins. The terms of collaboration agreements must not conflict with FNR and RCUK terms and conditions.
32. Arrangements for collaboration and/or exploitation must not prevent the future progression of research and the dissemination of research results in accordance with

academic custom and practice. A temporary delay in publication is acceptable in order to allow commercial and collaborative arrangements to be established.

33. The Grant Holder should, subject to the procedures laid down by the Research Organisation, publish the results of the research in accordance with normal academic practice. Publications and other forms of media communication, including media appearances, press releases and conferences, must acknowledge the support received from RCUK and FNR, quoting the grant reference number if appropriate.
34. The Research Organisation must ensure that all those associated with the research are aware of, and accept, these arrangements.

General Contact Points

35. General UK enquiries concerning the Statement of Intent and generic guidance should be addressed to the RCUK international team at international@rcuk.ac.uk. Please include RCUK FNR Agreement in the subject line to ensure the query can be passed to the correct team member.
36. Enquiries concerning individual UK Research Councils implementation of this agreement should be addressed to the contacts given in Section 2.
37. Enquiries to FNR should be addressed to:

Dr. Helena Burg
Head of International Relations
Tel : +352 261925-55
Email: helena.burg@fnr.lu

SECTION 2 – SUMMARY GUIDANCE NOTES FOR INDIVIDUAL UK RESEARCH COUNCILS

Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) (www.ahrc.ac.uk)

Transnational teams (UK and Luxembourg-based researchers) are invited to apply directly to the AHRC under the Research Grants Scheme. AHRC are now accepting proposals under this initiative.

The group of scholars should prepare a single application which must be submitted electronically by the UK-based Principal Investigator's Research Organisation to the AHRC Research Grant scheme via the Joint Electronic Submission (Je-S) System. If you need any assistance to use the system, please contact the JE-S helpdesk on 01793 444164 or on JesHelp@rcuk.ac.uk.

The AHRC Research Funding Guide provides an overview of the Research Grants scheme (<http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/documents/guides/research-funding-guide/>). It details the eligibility criteria, information on how to apply and terms and conditions of awards. In addition to the guidance outlined in the Funding Guide, the following guidelines apply:

Eligibility for UK-based element of project

Investigator

UK: The UK Principal Investigator must meet the AHRC's current eligibility criteria for standard AHRC Research Grant proposals. Please consult the *AHRC's Research Funding Guide* for further information on eligibility.

Luxembourg: Luxembourg applicants need to be from FNR eligible institutions, public research centres, the University of Luxembourg and public bodies, departments and establishments in Luxembourg with an authorisation to undertake research in their areas of competence.

Co-Investigators are permitted under this initiative. Please note, it is expected that the UK and Luxembourg side of the project should demonstrate fair balance.

Research Assistants

Research Assistants employed by the UK organisation need to meet the AHRC's threshold of being of postdoctoral standing (either having a PhD or equivalent research experience).

Project studentships

AHRC no longer funds project studentships unless explicitly specified in the scheme rules.

How to apply

Once the applicants have decided that the AHRC is the most appropriate UK Research Council, a single integrated project proposal should be submitted according to the procedures and processes used in applying to the AHRC's Research Grants scheme. The group of scholars should prepare a single application which must be submitted electronically by the UK-based Principal Investigator's Research Organisation to the AHRC Research Grant scheme via the Joint Electronic Submission (Je-S) System.

To prepare a proposal form in Je-S, log-in to your account and choose '**New Document**', then select **AHRC** as the Council, **Standard Proposal** as the Document Type, **Research**

Grants - Standard or Research Grants – Early Career (as appropriate) as the Scheme then select **Research Grants AHRC FNR Open Call** as the Call/Type/Mode and then 'Create Document'. Je-S will then create a proposal form, displaying the relevant section headings. Using the 'Help' link at the top of each section will provide guidance relevant to that section of the form.

Applicants do not need to apply additionally to FNR.

Case for Support and Justification of Resources

The case for support and justification of resources should outline all elements of the project and provide justification of all resources that are requested. Please note that for applications submitted **under the FNR agreement only**, the justification of resources should be no more than three sides of A4 in a font no smaller than size 11.

Proposal Language

Applications should be written in English.

How to identify the proposal is submitted under this scheme

Each application should be identified clearly as a collaborative proposal under the AHRC/FNR bilateral scheme by indicating this in the project title field. The text "**AHRC-FNR Agreement**" should precede the project title.

How to identify the details of the Luxembourg researcher involved

The applicant will need to complete Luxembourg details in the "project partner" section of the form. Under Name of Partner Organisation, please state the name of the Luxembourg Institution. Under Name of Contact, please indicate the Luxembourg researcher's details.

Costing

AHRC will accept proposals with a total full economic cost (fEC) of between £50,000 and £1,000,000 for the UK component of the project. If the application is successful, the AHRC will contribute 80% of these costs. Please note, only the UK component is costed under fEC.

The UK applicant must detail the UK component (the costs being incurred by the UK Research Organisations) of the costs according to AHRC financial guidelines on the appropriate section of the form.

The applicant must submit the Luxembourg costs as attachments to the application. These must be supplied using the relevant FNR budget sheet and budget justification form. FNR also requires the inclusion of a Gantt chart. These three documents must be attached using the attachment type 'non-UK component'. Please refer to the FNR website for access to these forms, or contact helena.burg@fnr.lu.

In addition to these three documents the UK applicant must attach a Letter of Support from the Luxembourg institution agreeing to the Luxembourg partner's involvement. The document must be attached to the application using the attachment type: 'Project Partner's Letter of Support'. Applicants should include English translations of any letters of support written in other languages.

Duration

Projects can be up to a maximum of 60 months.

Closing Date

This scheme operates to open deadlines.

How the application is assessed

In line with current AHRC practices, the assessment of application is a two-stage process: a written peer review followed by moderating panel.

All applications submitted to the AHRC will be assessed by peer reviewers selected by AHRC. For each application, FNR may propose peer reviewers to provide a written assessment. Peer reviewers will use the criteria and procedures applicable to AHRC. These comments will be formally incorporated in the AHRC's peer review processes. For the second stage, applications will be sent to an AHRC peer review moderating panel. The peer review moderating panel will determine a final grade for each application and will rank proposals in order of priority for funding. The panel will consider only the expert peer reviews, technical review (where applicable) and the PI's response to these reviews to reach its decision. Final funding decisions for UK-Luxembourg applications will rest with the AHRC and FNR.

Applicants should be aware that this will require that applications are processed by both AHRC and FNR officers. Applicants should provide written consent to the joint processing of the applications by AHRC and FNR at the end of the Case for Support under the heading of "Consent to Joint Processing".

For enquiries concerning the AHRC implementation of this Agreement please contact the AHRC international engagement team using: LLIE@ahrc.ac.uk
Sam Lamshead S.Lamshead@ahrc.ac.uk

For enquiries concerning the FNR implementation of this Agreement please contact:
helena.burg@fnr.lu

Biotechnological and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) (www.bbsrc.ac.uk)

The BBSRC accepts applications for funding under the terms of this Agreement. For more details on BBSRC funding schemes see <http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/funding/grants/grants-index.aspx>

Before making an application under the terms of this Agreement, applicants should contact the BBSRC, **BEFORE** submitting an application in order to discuss eligibility and handling an application under the Agreement.

For enquiries concerning the BBSRC implementation of this Agreement please contact BBSRC at bbsrc.iru@bbsrc.ac.uk.

For enquiries concerning the FNR implementation of this Agreement please contact:
helena.burg@fnr.lu

For submitted proposals, FNR nominated peer reviewers, and panel members will be approached by the BBSRC as part of the normal peer review process.

Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) (www.epsrc.ac.uk)

The EPSRC will accept applications under the terms of this Agreement to research base funding grant schemes. For more information on these schemes please see <http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/funding/routes/rb/Pages/funding.aspx>

Before making an application under the terms of this MoU applicants should contact EPSRC International team (International@epsrc.ac.uk) with details of the proposal to be submitted. Full guidance may be found on the EPSRC website at: <https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/about/partner/international/agreements/luxembourg/>

Applications received under the terms of this MoU will be subject to the same terms and conditions and assessment procedure as all EPSRC Grants.

For enquiries concerning the FNR implementation of this Agreement please contact: helena.burg@fnr.lu

Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) (www.esrc.ac.uk)

The ESRC accepts applications under the terms of this Agreement to its Research Grant Scheme, <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/funding-opportunities/3717/research-grants.aspx>. Other ESRC Schemes also utilise the Agreement. Please see the call information of individual schemes for details.

For more information and guidance for applications made to ESRC that utilise the RCUK/FNR bilateral agreement, please refer to <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/funding-opportunities/rcuk-fnr-bilateral-agreement/>

For enquiries concerning the ESRC implementation of this Agreement please contact:

Ben Sharman

Email: international@esrc.ac.uk or telephone +44 (0)1793 41 3146

For enquiries concerning the FNR implementation of this Agreement please contact: helena.burg@fnr.lu

Medical Research Council (MRC) (www.mrc.ac.uk)

The MRC will accept applications under the terms of this Agreement to its Partnership, Programme and Research Grant Schemes. For more information on these schemes please see <http://www.mrc.ac.uk/Fundingopportunities/Grants/index.htm>

Before making an application under the terms of this MoU applicants should contact Jessica Dixon, International Strategy Officer (jessica.dixon@headoffice.mrc.ac.uk) with details of the MRC scheme and deadline that you will be submitting to.

Applications received under the terms of this MoU will subject to the same terms and conditions and assessment procedure as all MRC Grants.

For enquiries concerning the MRC implementation of this Agreement please contact the MRC International Strategy Manager:

Sandeep Sandhu

Email: Sandeep.sandhu@headoffice.mrc.ac.uk or telephone +44 (0)1793 416359

For enquiries concerning the FNR implementation of this Agreement please contact: helena.burg@fnr.lu

Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) (www.nerc.ac.uk)

NERC accepts proposals under the terms of this Agreement to the following Discovery Science (Responsive Mode) Schemes:

- Standard Grants; and
- Large Grant.

Details of these schemes can be found at

<http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/available/researchgrants/>. The NERC Grants Handbook <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/application/howtoapply/forms> provides further information on the Standard and Large Grant Schemes. It details the eligibility criteria, information on how to apply and terms and conditions of awards.

Joint proposals may also be submitted to NERC Research Programme calls upon prior agreement with the FNR.

How to apply

The proposal must be submitted electronically by the UK-based Principal Investigator's Research Organisation to the NERC Standard or Large Grant scheme (or specific call, where applicable) via the Joint Electronic Submission (JeS) System. There is no special call for NERC/FNR proposals and the Standard and Large Grant or specific call closing dates apply.

Applicants do not need to apply additionally to FNR (for Discovery Science Standard and Large Grant calls), although some Luxembourg partners may choose to contact FNR.

For proposals to a NERC Research Programme call, FNR must have provided prior approval to the Luxembourg partners, before any joint proposal can be submitted.

Each proposal should be identified clearly as a collaborative proposal under the NERC/FNR bilateral scheme by pre-fixing the title in JeS with 'FNR'.

The Case for Support and Justification of Resources should outline all elements of the project and provide justification for all resources that are requested. The UK applicant must detail the UK component (the costs being incurred by the UK Research Organisations) of the costs according to NERC financial guidelines on the appropriate section of the form.

The UK applicant must name the Luxembourg collaborators as a Project Partner and add the full value of the FNR contribution in the project partner in-kind support section in the proposal form. CVs for each of the named Luxembourg collaborators should be combined into one document (maximum of 2 sides per person) and uploaded as the compulsory attachment of "Project Partner Letter of Support".

In addition to the NERC requirements, the following FNR forms need to be completed by the Luxembourg partners and uploaded by the lead UK applicant to the JeS form using the attachment type of "Non-UK Component":

- i. GANTT chart (INTER Project Plan)
- ii. Budget sheet for FNR requested funding, based on an EXCEL template (INTER budget)
- iii. Budget justification for FNR requested funding, based on a WORD document (INTER Budget details)

Templates of the above forms are available at <https://www.fnr.lu/international-cooperation/rcuk/>

For general enquiries concerning the NERC implementation of this agreement please contact researchgrants@nerc.ac.uk.

For enquiries concerning the FNR implementation of this Agreement please contact: helena.burg@fnr.lu

Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC) (www.stfc.ac.uk)

STFC will consider applications under the terms of this Agreement for any of its schemes. For more information on these schemes please see <http://www.stfc.ac.uk/funding/research-grants/>

Before making an application under the terms of this MoU, applicants should contact the relevant STFC Programme Manager **BEFORE** submitting an application in order to discuss the strategic fit of the proposal with STFC's science strategy.

For general enquiries concerning the STFC implementation of this Agreement please contact Andrew le Masurier: andrew.LeMasurier@stfc.ac.uk

For enquiries concerning the FNR implementation of this Agreement please contact: helena.burg@fnr.lu

Please note that this Operational Guidance note will be updated periodically as required. Please check that you have consulted the most recent version before submitting an application.

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Document History and Version Control

Version	Date	Change
1	30/09/2013	N/A
2	14/12/2016	Updated following extension of the MOU