

Human Resources Strategy for Researchers National Fund for Scientific Research – FRS (F.R.S.-FNRS)

I. Approach

The F.R.S.-FNRS endorsed the principles of the European Charter for Researchers" and the "Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers"¹ in 2005.

The F.R.S.-FNRS took part to the writing of the Guide "Wallonia-Brussels Partnership for Researchers"; which states 25 measures aimed at ensuring the WBF contributes to the European Charter for researcher and Code of Conduct for the recruitment of researchers²

The F.R.S.-FNRS participates to the 2nd Cohort of "Human resources Strategy group" created by the Commission.

The "Human Resources Strategy for Researchers" consists of five steps:

1. **Internal Analysis:** The policies and practices of the institution are compared with the principles of the Charter and Code of Conduct.
2. **Action Plan:** Based on this internal analysis, the institution establishes an HR strategy for researchers and outlines it in an action plan. This document is then made public.
3. **Acknowledgment:** The analysis and action plan is reviewed by the European Commission. Completion entitles the institution to receive an official "HR Excellence in Research" acknowledgement.
4. **Self-assessment:** Every two years, the research institution performs a self-assessment to assess the progress of the implementation of the Charter and action plan.
5. **External Assessment:** Every four years, an external assessment is conducted through a brief report.

In 2012, the Fund decided to undertake the internal analysis of its current practices. This document is the result of the procedure. It underlines the actions that already meet the Charter and Code principles and highlights the ones that should be undertaken in order to achieve that goal.

1.a Internal Analysis Procedure

The Fund initiated its "gap analysis" in January 2013 with respect to the 40 principles of the Charter and Code.

The process will follow the following steps:

- Compilation of all relevant F.R.S-FNRS rules and regulations.
- Consultation process conducted among F.R.S.-FNRS staff members through different meetings.

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/pdf/brochure_rights/am509774CEE_EN_E4.pdf

² http://www.euraxess-cfwb.be/doc/SPW_DG06_Parteneriat_FWB_UK_BD.pdf

- Writing of “internal analysis” and “Plan of actions” draft documents
- Analysis of these documents by the social consultative and negotiating body of the F.R.S.-FNRS. This body is composed of :
 - 9 employers' representatives - 7 from the universities (among whom the Chairman of the Fund) and 2 from the F.R.S.-FNRS Staff (among whom the Secretary general).
 - 11 researchers' Trade Union representatives: at least one of each university.
- Ratification by the F.R.S.-FNRS' Executive Committee and Board of Directors. These 2 bodies are composed of representatives of all Wallonia-Brussels Federation (WBF) universities as well as of representatives of the political, economical, scientific and social worlds.

II. Introducing the F.R.S.-FNRS

The F.R.S.-FNRS has been contributing to the development of fundamental research in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation for a little over 80 years. It develops non-oriented scientific research on the basis of initiatives presented by researchers.

The strategic plan of both the F.R.S.-FNRS and its associated Research Funds aims to address the challenges related to the ongoing changes in research policies at international level and to help researchers from the Wallonia-Brussels Federation and worldwide integrate the European Research Area.

The Fund encourages the production and development of knowledge by supporting researchers individually on the one hand, and by funding research programmes carried out at laboratories and services mainly located in the universities of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation, on the other.

The F.R.S.-FNRS does not have laboratories of its own. The researchers and laboratories funded by the F.R.S.-FNRS are part of universities and closely associated with their scientific endeavour.

The Fund wishes to update its infrastructures and develop its strategic projects at the service of researchers and research based on its values of Creativity, Excellence, and Transparency.

II.a Associated Funds

The F.R.S.-FNRS has 6 "Associated Funds": specialised scientific bodies closely connected to the evolution of research. Their structure and operating mode have been devised in such a way that, together, they form a coherent whole. Whereas the F.R.S.-FNRS, the FRIA and the FRESH mainly fund individual research (fellowships in all fields of science), the three other associated Funds (IISN, FRSM and FRFC) subsidise grants and research programmes submitted by researchers or laboratories. The newly created Associated Fund: the FRFS (Fund for Fundamental Strategic research) will launch calls on strategic thematic for society defined by the Wallonia Government, especially in the areas of biomedical research and sustainable development.

II.b Governing bodies

The F.R.S.-FNRS and its associated Funds are administered by an Executive Committee and a Board of Directors made up of representatives from academic institutions from the Wallonia-Brussels Federation as well as of personalities from the scientific, economic, social and political worlds.

II.c Funding

The F.R.S.-FNRS is a funder in the case of grants or research projects, and employer in the case of fellowships. The allocated financial support allows the promoter to recruit the required scientific and technical personnel, to acquire the necessary equipment, and to meet the operating costs.

II.d Instruments

The Fund supports researchers' mobility and activities promoting the dissemination of knowledge by means of a wide range of instruments:

The FNRS funding instruments are divided into 4 types:

- the "fellowships" instruments, that fund researchers at four different levels of expertise (3 calls/year)
- the "grants" instruments, that fund individual or collaborative research at the researchers' initiative (3 call/year)
- the "capacity" instruments, that focus particularly on research infrastructure (1call/year)
- the "life of research" instruments, intended for scientific dissemination and researchers' occasional requirements (e.g. mobility, conferences, etc.). (Accessible all year through).

These instruments are implemented as part of a "bottom-up" approach: the researcher is free to propose a research topic which he/she wishes to develop. However, in some cases, this freedom is practiced within the framework of a major topic regarded as important to society and for which the F.R.S.-FNRS receives a specific budget. This is called "strategic research".

III. Internal Analysis

III.1 ETHICAL ASPECTS

It is expected of the researcher that he/she complies with the Code of Ethics for scientific research in Belgium³, whatever his/her field of expertise. This code does not expressly refer to the laws and regulations in force, which must mandatorily be complied with. It aims to encourage the researcher to think in a responsible way about the conditions and consequences of the social integration of research activities, as well as on the close association between science, technology, economics and ethics.

In every evaluation process, the F.R.S.-FNRS refers to the main principles of ethically justified scientific practice, as defined in the Code of Ethics for scientific research in Belgium, and to the international standards applicable to medical research⁴.

Several projects require considering, in advance, ethical issues that might arise. The researcher must describe the proposal's ethical aspects along with the way he/she intends to take these into consideration.

In the case of research on animals or human beings, the applicant will have to fill in a form provided for that purpose. The way in which these ethical issues will be dealt with shall be taken into account in the scientific evaluation of the proposal.

In addition, the FNRSNEWS⁵ of March 2012 addressed the topic of ethical issues in research. The FRSNEWS is a quarterly magazine distributed at 250.000 copies.

Moreover, the F.R.S.-FNRS took part in the reflection on research integrity initiated by the ESF and was invited to give a lecture at the 11th University Foundation Ethical Forum entitled "Scientific Fraud: How it is done, why it is done, and what can be done about it" in November 2012.

Action 1: Include in the award letter to researchers a clause referring to the need to comply with the Code of Ethics for scientific research in Belgium.

III.2 PROFESSIONAL ATTITUDE

Even if some of its call target specific but large scientific areas, the F.R.S.-FNRS does not restrict to strategic areas of research and refrains from directing research. It is open to the researchers' initiative and creativity, leaving them free to choose the subject they want to explore and the methods they will use.

The F.R.S.-FNRS rules and regulations are clearly set out in its basic documents (regulations and guides). The researcher has taken due note of these and agrees to comply with them.

Moreover, the researcher is subject to the rules and regulations of his/her host institution.

³ http://www2.frs-fnrs.be/uploaddocs/docs/MON_FNRS/documents_externes/FRS-FNRS_ETHIQUE_ETHICS.pdf

⁴ http://www2.frs-fnrs.be/uploaddocs/docs/SOUTENIR/FRS-FNRS_Questionnaire_Ethique_Ethics.pdf

⁵ <http://www2.frs-fnrs.be/fr/communiquer-en-transparence/fnrs/fnrsnews.html>

III.2.a Funding decision

Decisions on funding are taken by the Board of Directors. This procedure ensures that the researcher knows about and complies with the institution's funding mechanisms and regulations. Drawing up reports (one one- and five-basis) on the development of the research is required. The operating, equipment or mobility costs received are administered by the host institution who grants the amount based on statements of claim which are then transferred to the F.R.S-FNRS for refund.

III.3 DISSEMINATION, EXPLOITATION OF RESULTS

The F.R.S.-FNRS offers several instruments to help researchers disseminate the results of their research.

An annual call is open to fund publications costs of high level scientific books or journals. The Wernaers Fund supports annually publications of scientific communication. In both cases selections are based on referees and scientific Commission recommendations.

The Fund aims to increase the links between the information it holds and that from the universities' institutional repositories. Universities from the Wallonia-Brussels Federation produce a rich and heterogeneous content including, among other things, research data, scientific literature, illustrations, audio and video files, departmental reports and online lectures. The institutional repositories of the universities of the WBF allow for the online promotion and dissemination of a variety of scientific work, self-managed by the universities' authors by means of "communities".

When researchers submit a proposal to the F.R.S.-FNRS, they must collect the lists of requested publications via the repositories. The F.R.S.-FNRS also relies on these repositories to promote fundamental research among various stakeholders.

The universities' Knowledge and Technology Offices (KTOs) promote research collaboration between universities and industries, and ensure optimum valorisation of the results of research through transfer of technologies to existing industries and the creation of new industries.

Action 2: Under an Open Access Mandate currently being ratified by the F.R.S.-FNRS' Board of Directors, the beneficiaries of F.R.S.-FNRS funding should provide free access (green road – via FWB universities institutional repositories) to the publications resulting from research carried out with the funding obtained.

III.4 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

With the aim to increase public interest in research and to highlight the usefulness of science, the F.R.S-FNRS intends to develop a proactive communication policy with the press and the public through press releases and conferences as well as through its FNRSNews.

Indeed, the F.R.S.-FNRS has been publishing since 1990 a quarterly magazine, the *Lettre du FNRS*, aimed at informing and familiarising the public with its researchers. Over the years, the *Lettre du FNRS* has tackled many areas of science. It is widely circulated, both among those close to the F.R.S.-FNRS (Agents, Board Members, etc.) and among the general public (individuals, media, schools).

In 2010, the *Lettre du FNRS* was modernised and became the FNRS NEWS. The objective of this periodical is to assert the existence of the F.R.S.-FNRS among members of the public who are interested in research, maintain links between those who take part in the *Télévie* (a large annual

fundraising campaign to fund leukaemia and cancer research), contribute to the F.R.S.-FNRS' image with opinion leaders (press, decision-making bodies, sponsors), promote the place of research in today's society, explain the difficulties the F.R.S.-FNRS and/or research in general are faced with. Some examples of recent themes are: women and science, biodiversity, sustainable development, ethics, GMO, etc.

In autumn 2012, the F.R.S.-FNRS launched an electronic Newsletter⁶ focussing on the activities of the F.R.S.-FNRS which gives researchers significant information for their career (calls, rules, prizes, etc.).

One of the FNRS' main communication tools is its website: www.frs-fnrs.be

Action 3: editing and partial translation into English of our website's content.

III.5 NON DISCRIMINATION

The F.R.S.-FNRS applies a non-discrimination policy. Fellowship calls are open to researchers of all nationalities. Evaluations are based on the sole criterion of excellence.

Since 1994 the F.R.S.-FNRS allows the extension of fellowships for Research Fellows or Postdoctoral Researchers up to a length equal to that of maternity, paternity or adoption leave.

In 2003, the aspect of childbirth was introduced with regards to the age required to submit an application (the maximum ages required are increased by one year per childbirth for female candidates).

Since 2010, the FNRS takes into consideration childbirth and adoption with regards to the limitation of the date at which the last diploma was awarded.

III.6 EVALUATION

The F.R.S.-FNRS implemented an in-depth reform of its evaluation procedures in 2010, so as to meet some of the Code's requirements.

Before each call opening, the FNRS publishes a mini guide for applicants with the following information:

- Schedule
- Rules and regulations
- Expected format of the applications
- Evaluation procedure
- Selection criteria
- Minimum number of available positions

The Guide for reviewers provides them key information related on

- funding instruments
- evaluation criteria
- evaluation procedures

Guides for both applicants and reviewers are published on the website in order to ensure the procedure's transparency

⁶ <http://www2.frs-fnrs.be/fr/communiquer-en-transparence/fnrs/newsletters.html>

The applicant makes a number of choices which impact the evaluation process of his/her project:

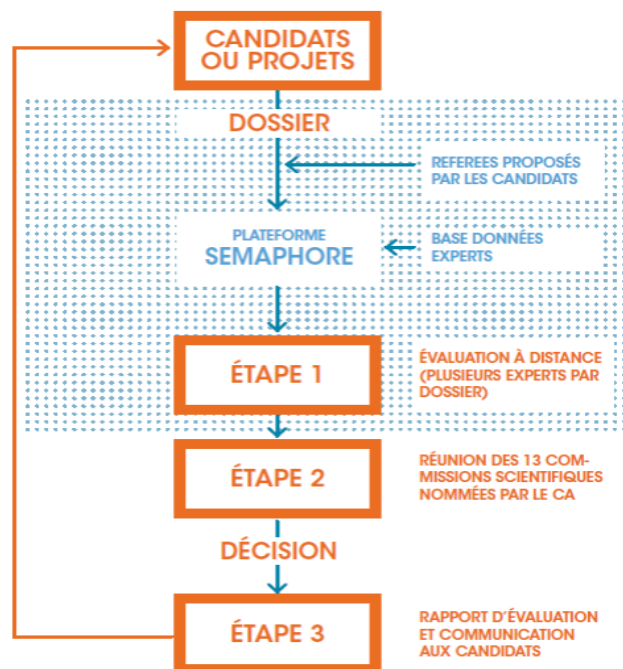
- the language (French or English) he/she chooses for his/her proposal will target the choice of individual reviewers towards those who can read the language;
- the project's descriptors and abstract;
- he/she may name up to 3 experts whom he/she does not want as reviewers and must justify this;
- he/she chooses the Scientific Commission which will be in charge of finalising the evaluation of his/her proposal.

The required levels of qualification are a Master's Degree for doctoral candidates and a PhD for post-doc candidates. For those holding a foreign PhD, an attestation of equivalence is no longer required. As the dossier is handed to the F.R.S.-FNRS by the universities, it means the latter have approved it. Furthermore, universities must give their assent to the researcher's appointment.

III.6.a Ex-ante evaluation

Applications submitted within the framework of the F.R.S.-FNRS instruments are subject to an ex-ante evaluation by the Scientific Commissions.

The common principles of the ex-ante evaluation of the F.R.S.-FNRS' calls for proposals are based on those implemented by the European Research Council:



- a two-step evaluation of the proposals:
 - the first step consists of a remote evaluation by high level experts,
 - the second consists of a consolidation of these evaluations by International Independent Scientific Commissions;
- mainly resorting to reviewers who are not part of the WBF;
- applicants are informed of the evaluation criteria as soon as the first preparation stage of their proposal;
- management of possible conflicts of interest at every stage of the evaluation;

- a final evaluation report is sent to all applicants and to their potential promoter, along with the notification of the decision made by the Board of Directors;
- publication of the names of the members of the Scientific Commissions.

The proposal must provide the reviewer the means to evaluate the applicant's potential through three dimensions:

- the applicant: factual elements showing his/her qualities, past achievements and, where applicable, letters from referees. Particular attention is given to scientific production, materialised in peer-reviewed publications;
- the research project: revealing his/her creativity, the soundness of his/her methodology and of his/her position within his/her field's scientific community;
- the research environment: means used by the researcher to carry out his/her project, and their consistency with the proposed project.

These elements are adjusted and balanced according to the objectives of each instrument.

An abstract of the project can be found on the F.R.S.-FNRS website⁷ so as to provide an overview of the awards and of the type of research being conducted.

External expert assessment (for FNRS fellowships and grants),

The number and composition of the Scientific Commissions, as well as the nomination of their members are determined by the F.R.S.-FNRS' Board of Directors. There are currently 14 commissions:

- 13 Thematic Scientific Commissions (4 in Exact and Natural Sciences, 4 in Life and Health Sciences, and 5 in Human and Social Sciences)
- 1 in the strategic interdisciplinary field of sustainable development (FORESIGHT)

Each Commission is composed of 9 members chosen from outside the WBF, including the President, and 6 WBF members. For members from outside the WBF, the term of office is of a maximum period of 3 years, renewable. For members from the WBF, the term of office is of one-year renewable three times.

All members of the Commissions must meet criteria of scientific excellence and of international recognition, and must have expertise and experience in evaluation. Members have a duty of confidentiality.

The compositions of the Scientific Commissions are available on the website.

Face to face interviews are organized for the selection of applicants to a PhD funded by the strategic associated funds FRIA (life, exact and natural sciences) and FRESH (human and social sciences).

The Examining Boards (around 30) are each composed of about ten members and cover all scientific fields. A quarter of these members are from either industrial sectors or civil society.

In addition to the selection criteria pertaining to the research project and the environment in which it will be carried out, the evaluation criteria regarding candidates consider both quantitative and qualitative aspects of their career and abilities and are adapted to the level of the position for which the candidates have applied. Eligibility criteria are based on formal qualifications. Non-formal qualifications may be mentioned on the CV and constitute one element among others used for assessing the candidate's career.

⁷ <http://admin.frs-fnrs.be/SITE2/Search/Recherche.cfm>

Moreover, a blank box is provided on the form for the candidate to highlight any elements he/she wishes to draw attention to and which haven't been explicitly requested (e.g. teaching or management experience, etc.).

A candidate's achievements are especially evaluated on the basis of his/her scientific publications (and in the case of senior post-docs, his/her international recognition).

The F.R.S.-FNRS does not operate individual ex-post assessment of doctoral or post-doctoral researchers under fixed-term contracts but collects (from 2013) data pertaining to their scientific activities during their contract period.

III.6.b Ex-post evaluation

All researchers must provide the F.R.S.-FNRS with an annual report. Moreover, permanent researchers must also provide a five-year report.

From 2013, this evaluation will follow the same procedure as the ex-ante evaluation one described above (two-step procedure: remote evaluations + meeting of independent international scientific commissions).

Action 4: Ex-post evaluation procedures based on data collected annually are currently being developed.

III.7 RECRUITMENT

III.7.a Researchers Career at the F.R.S.-FNRS

The F.R.S.-FNRS' researcher career is composed of 4 levels:

- Level 1: doctoral grants (FNRS Research Fellows or FRIA and FRESH scholarship holders). Duration of 2 years (+2 years) for young researchers wishing to prepare for a PhD.
- Level 2: postdoctoral positions (Postdoctoral Researchers). Duration of 3 years for postdoctoral researchers at the start of their career.
- Level 3: permanent research positions (Research Associates). Long-term position for established researchers.
- Level 4: permanent research positions (Senior Research Associates – Research Directors). Long-term position for experienced researchers.

Access to each of these levels is based firstly on eligibility criteria and then on an evaluation carried out by scientific commissions or panels, as detailed above in this document. The salary scales are adjusted to each level. The grants are subject to social security but not to income tax.

The career of permanent researcher at the F.R.S.-FNRS offers the perspective of employment stability. The Decree of the French Community of 19 July 1991 on the career of scientific researchers describes the scientific career and the income pertaining to it. Moreover, Belgian law stipulates that beyond 2 consecutive fixed-term contracts, the contract becomes permanent.

In most cases the permanent researcher will continue his/her career within the university as lecturer-researcher, thus freeing up a post of permanent researcher within the F.R.S.-FNRS. This option is

more in line with the European definition of level 4 posts, which involves transmission of knowledge (teaching) in addition to team management.

The working conditions are those offered by the host university. The researcher is also subject to the working regulations of the institution.

The F.R.S.– FNRS also provides the necessary professional insurance cover when travelling abroad is required.

For commuting between home and workplace, the F.R.S.– FNRS covers travel by bicycle (0.22€/km, self-declaration) and by public transport (up to 75%, based on receipts).

The researcher is covered by social security at all stages of his/her career.

Under the Belgian social security system, researchers are covered with full social security benefits, regardless of their nationality, as they are considered to be publicly-funded researchers. Belgian scheme of social security covers sickness, maternity, disability, pension insurance, unemployment, accidents, occupational diseases and family benefits. There is no difference whether the researcher has an employment contract or receives stipend.

In addition, all permanent researchers benefit from a legal pension as well as pension insurance and hospitalisation insurance.

III.7.b Research environment

The researchers work in laboratories within universities: consequently, the universities are responsible for the infrastructure.

In addition, the F.R.S.–FNRS attends to the quality of the research environment via the following instruments:

- The contact group. This contact group, disciplinary or interdisciplinary, allows for a group of researchers to meet on a regular basis. The aim is to allow contact and fast exchange of information and reflections both between Belgian and foreign specialists who work in the same scientific field, or in different fields linked by the use of the same techniques or multidisciplinary equipment.
The group is an interuniversity group and may include researchers and professors from outside the Wallonia-Brussels Federation.
- Capacities.
This term refers to all instruments (grants and infrastructures) allowing the funding of strategic means in the long term which, in addition to their shared use by researchers, have a structuring effect on the organisation of research.

In December 2012, the F.R.S.–FNRS Board of Directors decided to authorise the F.R.S.–FNRS Research Associates/Senior Research Associates/Research Directors to valorise part of their working time on European programmes: framework programme FP7 (maximum time: 50%) or ERC (no time limit).

Permanent researchers may take on teaching tasks for which they are paid, but this may not exceed 90h/year for Research Associates and 120h/year for senior Research Associates and Directors.

This is taken into account by the universities when they evaluate a permanent researcher's application to a new academic post.

Conflict situations are resolved in consultation with the academic authorities. Researchers are subject to the universities' regulations and may appeal to a local ombudsman. The researcher always has a supervisor holding a tenured position at the university. In case of dispute with this supervisor, the Secretary General of the FNRS and the university's Rector will endeavour to find an amicable solution.

III.8 GENDER BALANCE

III.8.a Evaluation and selection bodies

Overall, women are a minority within the various scientific evaluation bodies (various panels and scientific commissions) of the F.R.S.–FNRS: 20% on average.

The only exception is the commission for scientific publications subsidies, with 42% of its members being female.

According to the report "She Figures 2009 - Statistics and Indicators on Gender Equality in Science" of the European Commission, the proportion of women on boards or scientific commissions in Europe is on average **22%**. So the F.R.S.–FNRS figures correspond to the European average.

III.8.b National context

The proportion of women within academic staff at WBF universities is on average **24%**. The higher the grades (and therefore the age), the smaller the proportion of women.

Regarding the permanent researchers in post at the F.R.S.–FNRS, 31.9% of Research Associates, 31.6% of Senior Research Associates, and 21.2% of Research Directors are women.

The proportion of women here is higher (**30% on average**) than within the universities' academic staff.

The trend seems however to be changing with time and with generations as there are more women holding "young" permanent posts than women holding "old" permanent posts.

As most members of Scientific Commissions are established researchers, it is likely that the increase in the number of women among the younger generation of researchers and the universities' academic staff (both in Belgium and abroad) will also be noticeable within the Scientific Commissions and other panels in the coming years.

To date, the rules and regulations pertaining to the F.R.S.–FNRS' SC stipulate:

Article 4: Nomination of the Scientific Commissions' experts

4.1 *The Guidance Committee has suggested a composition of the Scientific Commissions to the F.R.S.–FNRS Board of Directors, which includes their Chairman. This composition will take into account the scientific quality and the complementarity of expertise in terms of scientific disciplines, while aiming as much as possible for a suitable balance between men and women.*

Among the 25 measures stated by the "Wallonia-Brussels Partnership for Researchers" guide, 6 specifically concern equality between men and women:

- Recommendations regarding circumstantial leave.
- Recommendations regarding the composition of panels and scientific commissions.
- Measures aimed at integrating issues of differences in life trajectories in the evaluation of scientific dossiers.
- Support associations that are promoting women in scientific careers.
- Integrate gender issues into curricula.
- Increase the monitoring of these decisions at high level through the working group "women and science".

III.8.c Candidates

48% of the candidates to a fellowship or a promotion in 2012 were women. However, their number decreases inversely to its level. Thus, **54.4%** of women applied for a Research Fellowship (out of a total of 450 candidates), **48.4%** for a Postdoctoral Researcher Fellowship (out of a total of 308 candidates), **33.3%** for a Research Associate Fellowship (out of a total of 117 candidates), **25%** for a Senior Research Associate Fellowship (out of a total of 16 requests), and only **14.3%** for a Research Director Fellowship (out of a total of 14 requests).

Among the **proposals to award grants** made to the F.R.S.–FNRS' CA (meeting of 26 June 2012), the proportion of women does not vary noticeably from those corresponding to the levels of the applications: 53% of women among the **research fellows** put forward for grants (54.4% of the candidates) 44% of women among the **postdoctoral researchers (CR)** put forward for grants (48.4% of the candidates), and 31.7% of women on the list of potential **research associate** nominations (33.3% of the candidates).

This would suggest that there is no bias in the selection procedure caused by the fact that among the members of the scientific commissions, women are a minority. Statistical independence tests have confirmed these observations.

The distribution of applications between scientific fields is however very imbalanced.

III.8.d GENDER-Net

The F.R.S.–FNRS has recently confirmed its participation in GENDER-Net, an ERA-Net on gender issues and research.

The main objectives are aim at facilitating cooperation and coordination of initiatives put in place by Member States and Associated States at national or regional level, including:

- Exchange of good practice regarding the promotion of gender equality within research institutions
- Integration of the gender dimension in research
- Development of strategic trans-national activities

Participation in GENDER-Net will allow the F.R.S.–FNRS to:

- Take part in a benchmarking exercise at European level.
- Take part in an exchange of good practice with other agencies which have implemented gender diversity policies and which are often pioneers in this matter.
- Take part effectively in the reflection on improving the circumstances of female researchers.

Action 5: Gender is one of the parameters in our “reviewers” database. It's a criterion that is increasingly taken into account when selecting our panel members and our external reviewers, and it is also included in the analysis of all calls.

III.9 MOBILITY

From the start, the FNRS has provided subsidies for short trips abroad, attendance to conventions, the organisation of symposiums and inviting foreign scientists to Belgium. It has improved the mechanisms allowing mobility and increased the number of international, bilateral and multilateral collaborations aiming to fund the exchange of researchers between two countries, for a duration of several months.

Furthermore, the F.R.S.–FNRS has implemented the instrument ULYSSE for the establishment of new researchers in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation and is the local bridgehead of the Euraxess network

for the universities of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation (EURAXESS-CFBW portal), aiming to promote and facilitate researchers' mobility.

From 1 October 2012, every new post-doc researcher in charge of research has the opportunity to use the 3 years of his/her fellowship over a period of 6 years, provided external funding for a post-doc abroad is found.

Portability of grants is not allowed, but every agent may undertake long-term trips for research in another country during his/her fellowship, provided he/she has obtained permission from his/her promoter to whom he/she remains "attached".

The FNRS is currently analysing its international policy in order to draw strategic guidelines for the future.

All matters pertaining to ethics, publications, intellectual property and more social issues fall under the responsibility of the host institution.

Action 6: Survey on the impact of F.R.S.-FNRS international activities funding on research outcomes.

III.10 SOCIAL CONSULTATIVE AND NEGOTIATING BODY

The F.R.S.-FNRS Board of Directors decided to implement an ad hoc social consultation and negotiating body that is complementary to the joint bodies in place at the universities and complies with the legal provisions whereby the F.R.S.-FNRS researchers are, regarding information and consultation, considered as employees of the establishment where they have their research fellowship.

Its Memorandum of Understanding has been negotiated between the F.R.S.-FNRS Board of Directors and Trade union representatives. It defines:

- areas of competence,
- composition of the employers' and trade unions' delegations,
- meeting procedures.

Decisions made and options chosen by the F.R.S.-FNRS Board of Directors that may have an impact on employment, status and working conditions of its staff, will necessarily give rise to concertation with staff representatives.

The employers' delegation of the body is composed of 11 members, including 9 academics, among whom the President of the F.R.S.-FNRS, and 2 members specific to the F.R.S.-FNRS, among whom the Secretary General of the F.R.S.-FNRS. The trade unions' delegation is composed of 11 fellows, at least one member from each university, and to reflect the inter-university balances, in line with the functioning of the F.R.S.-FNRS.

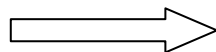
The Trade unions' delegation has also agreed that at least 2/3 of the delegation will be composed of F.R.S.-FNRS agents by the 1st of October 2017.

This memorandum is in response to a political constraint and ensures the operational structure of the F.R.S.-FNRS is kept intact, i.e. the extremely important triangular relation linking the F.R.S.-FNRS researchers, the universities and the F.R.S.-FNRS organisation.

Furthermore, FNRS researchers can be elected to the Board of Directors and the Works Council of the universities.

Action 7: The Board of Directors members will include 2 F.R.S.-FNRS researchers.

Key:

 Initiation and development period

 Monitoring period

Request for recognition by the European Commission

2013 2014 2015 2016

Actions **Name of person in charge**

Action 1: Insert Clause on need to comply to Code of Ethics in Award Letter	Head of Fellowships and Grants Department
Action 2: Open Access	Board of Directors
Action 3: Translation of Web site	Head of Communication Department
Action 4: Ex-post Evaluation Procedures	Head of Fellowships and Grants Department
Action 5: Gender	Prospective and Evaluation Unit
Action 6: Survey	Head of International Relations Department
Action 7: Composition of Boards of Directors	Board of Directors

