APPLICATION GUIDELINES
CALL 2015 FOR COLLECTIVE AFR PROJECTS
WITH RIKEN

Table of Contents
1. Introduction .................................................................................................................. 2
2. General Principles ...................................................................................................... 3
  2.1. Eligible Applicants ............................................................................................... 3
  2.2. Eligible Institutions ............................................................................................. 3
  2.3. Selection Criteria .................................................................................................. 4
  2.4. Project Characteristics ......................................................................................... 4
  2.5. Ethical Issues ....................................................................................................... 4
3. Applying for the AFR Call .......................................................................................... 7
  3.1. Evaluation process ............................................................................................... 7
  3.2. FNR Grant Management System (Online Submission) ....................................... 7
4. AFR-PDR Application ................................................................................................ 8
  4.1. Application submission procedure ..................................................................... 8
  4.2. Application elements .......................................................................................... 8
  4.3. Step 1: Completing the Online Application Form ............................................. 9
  4.4. Step 2: Submitting the Online Application Form ............................................... 10
1. Introduction

Through the research grant scheme AFR (Aides à la Formation-Recherche) PhD and postdoctoral level research training in Luxembourg and abroad is supported. This specific call is dedicated to the cooperation between Luxembourg based research institutions and research institutions and universities from Singapore.

Research under AFR should fulfill the following general principles:

- Adequate attention needs to be paid to working conditions, transparency of recruitment, equal opportunities and career development as regards the AFR applicants. In these matters, the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers offer a reference framework.

- Under the AFR scheme, employment contracts are the rule. In Luxembourg, the FNR exclusively supports researchers having an employment contract.

- AFR grants cover the salary up to a maximum contribution indicated in the Terms and Conditions. Other costs such as overheads or consumables are not covered.

- Research should respect fundamental ethical principles, including those described in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. Qualifying Research Bodies are expected to have in place clear ethical guidelines and assurance procedures designed to manage research under their direction.

- Research misconduct, e.g. provision of false information, plagiarism or falsification of data, results in a rejection of the proposal. The FNR reserves the right to pursue further steps according to the ‘Research Integrity Guidelines’ accessible on the FNR website (http://www.fnr.lu/en/Calls,-Forms-Guidelines/General-FNR-Guidelines).

- Regarding Research integrity, the FNR endorses the following references: The « Singapore Statement on Research Integrity » adopted in 2010 following the 2nd World Conference on Research Integrity, and « The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity » published by the ESF (European Science Foundation) and ALLEA (All European Academies).

- Ideas and/or text belonging to others must be properly referenced, based on international standards. All applications will be checked for plagiarism and any misconduct may result in the immediate disqualification of the application.

- An adequate set of scientific and non-scientific trainings shall be offered to each AFR beneficiary to enhance the career perspectives beyond the AFR funding period.

- The dissemination of research results and transfer of knowledge are key added values of a research project. The FNR expects that each funded AFR results in at least one peer-reviewed first author publication. The commercial and/or industrial exploitation of research results is also greatly encouraged when it is appropriate. In addition, the FNR fosters the dissemination of research towards the general public and the media. Measures need to be taken to increase the use and impact of results by industry, policy

---

1 The European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for their recruitment can be downloaded from http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/rights

2 http://www.singaporestatement.org/


4 The FNR considers the following as peer-reviewed publications: a publication in a journal of the list of journals with impact factors published yearly by ISI Thompson; a publication in the journal index established by SCOPUS; a publication in peer-reviewed conference proceedings; or a monograph with a review board.
makers and society. Financial support from the FNR must be acknowledged in all publications and other forms of media communication, press releases and conferences.

2. General Principles

The call for collective AFR projects with Singapore has no thematic limitations.

The aim of this call is to foster the cooperation between Luxembourg based public research institutions and one or several RIKEN research centres.

Each proposal must request at least 2 positions at PhD or Post-Doc level. The majority of the research activities for each requested position will need to be carried out at a Luxembourg based eligible research institution (see section 2.2), i.e. more than 50% of research time is spent in Luxembourg, under an employment contract. Additionally at least 20% of the research time needs to be spend at one or several of the above-mentioned Singapore public research institutions.

FNR funding is limited to:

- 4 years for PhD positions
- 2 years for Postdoc positions.

Applications have to be written in English.

2.1. Eligible Applicants

There are two conditions applicable to the case of Post-Doc funding:

- the Postdoc candidate has principally (>12 months) worked outside Luxembourg in the 24 months preceding the call deadline, or
- the Postdoc candidate has principally (>12 months) worked in the private sector in Luxembourg in the 24 months preceding the call deadline.

2.2. Eligible Institutions

The Host Institution (HI) is the institution (and the research group) where the PhD and/or Post-Doc candidates will perform the major part of their research work.

The hosting institution should ensure that it can offer an employment contract for the full duration, i.e. 48 months for PhD candidates and 24 months for Postdocs.

The following are eligible HI for this call:

1) Public institutions performing research in Luxembourg
2) Non-profit associations and foundations performing research in Luxembourg having obtained a special authorization from the Ministry for Higher education and Research.¹

The involved following public research institutions from Singapore are denominated ‘Collaborating Institution(s)’. Additional Luxembourg based institutions which play a major

¹ For more information on eligibility, please consult the following webpage: http://www.fnr.lu/en/about-us/beneficiaries
role in the execution of the project should be listed under ‘Collaborating Institution(s)’ as well. The collaborating institution(s) will not employ the PhD and/or Post-Doc candidates but commits to offer scientific guidance as well as office and/or laboratory space, if applicable.

If deemed necessary, other institutions may be involved and should be listed under “other collaborations”.

### 2.3. Selection Criteria

The applications will be assessed according to the following selection criteria as specified in article 3(12) of the law creating the FNR, namely:

1. Scientific quality of the research and training programme
2. Contribution of the research programme to the training and career development of the involved researchers
3. Scientific quality of the Host Institution
4. Potential of the research programme to contribute to the strategic goals of the HI
5. Interest of the research programme in the Luxembourg R&D setting

### 2.4. Project Characteristics

**Latest possible start** for the individual PhD or Postdoc work contracts is 1st January 2017.

**Employment contracts are the rule.**

**Travel lump sum**

For positions, the FNR allocates a one-off travel lump sum based on the airline distance between the candidate’s residence at the moment of the application and her/his Host Institution. For further details, please refer to the ‘AFR Terms and Conditions’.

Furthermore a lump sum is foreseen to cover travel back and forth to Singapore as well as accommodation costs in Singapore:

- 10.000€ for PhD positions
- 5.000€ for Postdoc positions

**Training allowance**

The FNR strongly encourages complementing basic academic training with additional training targeting skills development to increase the employability and career prospects of researchers. A **specific budget** for scientific and non-scientific training is available to cover additional costs (e.g. travel to scientific conferences, conference registration fees):

- 6.000€ for PhD positions
- 4.000€ for Postdoc positions

### 2.5. Ethical Issues

Research should respect fundamental ethical principles, including those described in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. Qualifying Research Bodies are
expected to have in place clear ethical guidelines and assurance procedures designed to manage research under their direction. Where an applicant’s research proposal requires approval by the relevant Research Body Ethics Committee, written evidence of such ethical approval will need to be obtained and available for examination by the FNR prior to the launch of the concerned part of the project. The applicant together with the host institution must take into account in a realistic manner the duration of processing of these authorisations into their work plan. The AFR beneficiary and his/her host institution must make sure that they respect any legal obligations concerning ethical issues and data protection (see AFR Terms and Conditions).

In case the project raises ethical issues, these need to be properly described in the proposal with an explanation how these issues will be addressed. The present Ethical Issues Table from the ERC grant proposals provides a guide to what are considered to be ethical issues. If the answer to any of the questions of the Ethical Issues Table is YES, the applicant must provide a brief description of the ethical issue involved and how it will be dealt with appropriately. In particular, it should outline the benefit and burden of such research, the effects it may have and how the ethical issues will be managed. Ethical issues need to be considered for the whole postdoctoral project and for the activities executed in Luxembourg and abroad. The applicant should specify any already existing authorisation or permission for the proposed work and include copies (the copies do not count towards the page limit). On this basis, a proper ethical screening is possible, if the proposal is considered for funding.

The following Ethical Issues Table is also in annex of the project description template and has to be fully completed. Furthermore the ethical and data protection issue section of the online application form has to be filled in.

**Ethical Issues Table**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research on Human Embryo/Foetus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does the proposed research involve human Embryos?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the proposed research involve human Foetal Tissues/ Cells?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the proposed research involve human Embryonic Stem Cells (hESCs)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the proposed research on human Embryonic Stem Cells involve cells in culture?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the proposed research on Human Embryonic Stem Cells involve the derivation of cells from Embryos?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DO ANY OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL?</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research on Humans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does the proposed research involve children?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the proposed research involve patients?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the proposed research involve persons not able to give consent?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the proposed research involve adult healthy volunteers?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the proposed research involve Human genetic material?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the proposed research involve Human biological samples?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the proposed research involve Human data collection?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DO ANY OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL?</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Privacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does the proposed research involve processing of genetic information or personal data (e.g. health, sexual lifestyle, ethnicity, political opinion, religious or philosophical conviction)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the proposed research involve tracking the location or observation of people?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DO ANY OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL?</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Research on Animals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does the proposed research involve research on animals?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are those animals transgenic small laboratory animals?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are those animals transgenic farm animals?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are those animals non-human primates?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are those animals cloned farm animals?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DO ANY OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL?**

### Research Involving Developing Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does the proposed research involve the use of local resources (genetic, animal, plant, etc.)?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the proposed research of benefit to local communities (e.g. capacity building, access to healthcare, education, etc.)?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DO ANY OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL?**

### Dual Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research having direct military use</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research having the potential for terrorist abuse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DO ANY OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL?**

### Other Ethical Issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are there OTHER activities that may raise Ethical Issues?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If YES please specify:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following special issues should be taken into account:

**Informed consent:** When describing issues relating to informed consent, it will be necessary to illustrate an appropriate level of ethical sensitivity, and consider issues of insurance, incidental findings and the consequences of leaving the study.

**Data protection issues:** Avoid the unnecessary collection and use of personal data. Identify the source of the data, describing whether it is collected as part of the research or whether it was collected previously. Consider issues of informed consent for any data being used. Describe how personal identify of the data is protected.

**Use of animals:** Where animals are used in research, the application of the 3Rs (Replace, Reduce, Refine) must be convincingly addressed. Numbers of animals should be specified. Describe what happens to the animals after the research experiments.

**Human embryonic stem cells:** Research proposals that will involve human embryonic stem cells (hESC) will have to address all the following specific points:

- the applicants should demonstrate that the project serves important research aims to advance scientific knowledge in basic research or to increase medical knowledge for the development of diagnostic, preventive or therapeutic methods to be applied to humans.
- the necessity to use hESC in order to achieve the scientific objectives set forth in the proposal. In particular, applicants must document that appropriate validated alternatives (in particular, stem cells from other sources or origins) are not suitable and/or available to achieve the expected goals of the proposal. This latter provision does not apply to research comparing hESC with other human stem cells.
- the applicants should take into account the legislation, regulations, ethical rules and/or codes of conduct in place in the country(ies) where the research using hESC is to take place, including the procedures for obtaining informed consent;
• the applicants should ensure that for all hESC lines to be used in the project were derived from embryos
• of which the donor(s)’ express, written and informed consent was provided freely, in accordance with national legislation prior to the procurement of the cells.
• that result from medically-assisted in vitro fertilisation designed to induce pregnancy, and were no longer to be used for that purpose.
• of which the measures to protect personal data and privacy of donor(s), including genetic data, are in place during the procurement and for any use thereafter. Researchers must accordingly present all data in such a way as to ensure donor anonymity;
• of which the conditions of donation are adequate, and namely that no pressure was put on the donor(s) at any stage, that no financial inducement was offered to donation for research at any stage and that the infertility treatment and research activities were kept appropriately separate.

3. Applying for the AFR Call

3.1. Evaluation process

This call guarantees an independent, state-of-the-art evaluation of the application, and has the objective to select the research projects and applicants that reflect academic excellence. All proposals will be evaluated according to the five selection criteria mentioned above. The AFR review process consists of several stages:

• Proposals undergo an administrative eligibility check. Applicants will receive a confirmation of the eligibility or non-eligibility of the proposal. In case of non-eligibility, the reasons are indicated and the application will not be assessed.
• Eligible proposals are peer-reviewed by independent experts.
• The funding decision is formalised by the FNR before being communicated to the applicants.

Special attention will be given to project proposals that raise ethical and/or data protection issues.

The funding decision will be communicated to the applicants within 3 months.

The description of the review process and the selection criteria can be found in the publication ‘Peer Review Guidelines’ available on the FNR webpage: www.fnr.lu/AFR.

3.2. FNR Grant Management System (Online Submission)

All FNR Calls, including the current call, are managed through an online submission system (FNR Grant Management System) accessible via https://grants.fnr.lu. This system provides applicants a web services interface for automated submission and further monitoring of completed grant applications and related services (acknowledgement emails, notifications and reminders). The publication ‘e-Tutorial: Online Application’ explains how to log into the system and how to create a new application. Please download it from the webpage: https://grants.fnr.lu/help/
The system will guide the applicant through the different steps of the application procedure. All forms have to be filled in online and submitted in electronic format.

For documents that need to be uploaded to the online system, please respect the font and page limitations indicated in the application forms! If page limitations are not respected, the FNR retains the right to shorten the document and only forward the correct amount of pages to the external evaluators! In order to be eligible, the valid forms of the relevant call have to be used.

For technical questions regarding the FNR Grant Management System, please contact us by e-mail at tech-support@fnr.lu or call our Help Desk at +352 26 19 25 45.

4. AFR-PDR Application

4.1. Application submission procedure

Applicants must submit their application in electronic format to the online submission system (FNR Grant Management System) https://grants.fnr.lu no later than 14:00 (CET) on the deadline. To be eligible, applicants have to use the templates valid for the relevant call.

For documents that need to be uploaded to the online system, please respect the font and page limitations indicated in the application forms! If page limitations are not respected, the FNR retains the right to shorten the document and only forward the correct amount of pages to the external evaluators! In order to be eligible, the valid forms of the relevant call have to be used.

Incomplete applications and/or late submissions will make the application non eligible and the application will be turned down without further evaluation!

For technical questions regarding the FNR Grant Management System, please contact us by e-mail at tech-support@fnr.lu or call our Help Desk at +352 26 19 25 45.

4.2. Application elements

The application consists of the following elements:

- The Online Application Form: to be accessed and completed online in the FNR’s online Grant Management System (https://grants.fnr.lu).
- The Project Description Form contains detailed information on the proposed research project. A Word file template is to be downloaded and completed offline, afterwards converted to PDF and then uploaded to the PDR Online Application Form in the online system. The ‘Project Description’ cannot be submitted alone.
- The supporting documentation (to be uploaded):
  - Recent Curriculum Vitae of all main senior scientists involved in the project
  - A single joint of Letter of Support to be provided by the main senior scientists involved in the project.

Incomplete applications will be turned down without further evaluation!
Step 1: Completing the Online Application Form

Step 1 consists of 5 different tasks, which are presented as a ‘To Do’ list:

- Task 1: Enter your contact and address details
- Task 2: Fill in the Online Application Form (+ uploads, including the Project Description Form)
- Task 3: Generate a PDF Document
- Task 4: Check application for completeness
- Task 5: Make sure your Scientific Advisor(s) have sent their support letters before the deadline

After completion of each task, press the button ‘Done’ to validate the completion of the task and remove it from your ‘To Do’ list.

The first task named ‘Enter your contact and address details’ requires you to enter your details in the Online System. The hyperlink brings you directly to the Online Contact Form. Please click on the “Save” button after having completed the form. Applicants are advised to keep their contact details in the online system up-to-date.

A click on the hyperlink of the second task named ‘Online Application Form – AFR’ brings you to the Online Application Form (labelled ‘Smart form’) for the AFR Proposal, which contains the administrative and budgetary details of your project. The present document (Application Guidelines) will guide you through the application stages.

The Online Application Form is divided into 6 sections that can be accessed individually:

- Section 1. Coordinator
- Section 2. Details on Host Institution and Collaborating Institution(s)
- Section 3. Research Project
- Section 4. Legal and Ethical Requirements
- Section 5. Type of Grant
- Section 6. Attachments

If there is a reference to sections in these Guidelines below, they refer to the numbering of sections in the online Grant Management System.

The ‘Online Application Form’ may be saved at any time and you may come back to it later on. Before you may submit the completed form however, you need to make sure that all mandatory questions (marked with *) have been filled out. The system partially warns you of mandatory sections but put a special attention on the completeness of documents that need to be uploaded. Please also ensure that all data is correct before submission.

In the section 6 you have to ‘Download the AFR PDR Project Description Form’. Please save it to your desktop and complete it off-line. A detailed description of the form is available in the dedicated section below.

4.3.1. Attachments

Project Description of the Research Project

Further information is provided in the downloadable document.
Scientific advisors’(s’) CV(s)

Please upload a recent curriculum vitae of the main senior scientists involved in the project into the system (max. 4 pages/CV merged into a single PDF File). Only PDF files can be uploaded!

Please include:
1. The number of supervised doctoral and postdoctoral projects as supervisor/scientific advisor
2. Information about the outcomes of the last three supervised PhDs und Postdocs (finished, including drop-outs): name, duration, success, dissemination (i.e. publications, conferences, patents, public talks...), and career track of candidates, if applicable
3. List of most recent publications (not more than 10)
4. List of invited talks at international conferences
5. Information on acquired external funding
6. List of own most relevant patents, if applicable

Letter of support

Please upload a letter of support signed jointly by the main senior scientists of all involved Luxembourg and Singapore research institutions. The letter should clearly demonstrate the support to the project by all involved parties and should also provide details about the research environment and how the supervision/training of the candidates will be organized.

Ensure that you correctly filled all sections of the application form. The system partially warns you of mandatory sections but put a special attention on the completeness of documents that need to be uploaded.

The third task of Step 1 is to generate a PDF document that contains all the information of your ‘Online Application Form’. Click on the hyperlink named ‘Generate Full Proposal PDF’. The PDF document will appear in the documents list on the right side of the screen. If the document named ‘Generated PDF’ does not appear in the list after a few minutes, please click on the refresh button of your browser.

Before submitting the application, applicants are advised to check the generated Pdf for completeness and correctness! (Fourth task)

4.4. Step 2: Submitting the Online Application Form

After having generated the report in PDF format, please open the document and check if it is complete and correct. Especially ensure that the right uploads have been attached.

To finally submit the application click the button ‘Submit to FNR’.

If you need further advice and support, please contact the AFR Programme Assistant in charge of your thematic group.