

# APPLICATION GUIDELINES

## AFR PHD-CALL 2014-1

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## 1. Introduction

The national research grant scheme AFR (Aides à la Formation-Recherche) supports PhD and postdoctoral level research training in Luxembourg and abroad.

PhD training under AFR should fulfil 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<sup>1</sup>.

Under the AFR scheme, **employment contracts** are the rule. In Luxembourg, the AFR scheme exclusively supports researchers having an employment contract. Outside Luxembourg, fellowships without employment contract ("stipends", paid directly to the beneficiaries) are only possible in well-justified cases (i.e. where the conclusion of an employment contract with the host institution is not possible or results in a net salary of the Beneficiary below  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the amount received for a stipend). The institution hosting a PhD applicant should ensure that it can offer an employment contract for the full duration of the project, i.e. 36 months.

- AFR grants cover the salary or, under a stipend, the living costs up to a max. 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, may result 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 ([www.fnr.lu/en/Calls.-Forms-Guidelines/General-FNR-Guidelines](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<sup>2</sup>, and « The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity »<sup>3</sup> published by the ESF (European Science Foundation) and ALLEA (All European Academies).
- In addition to PhD supervision, 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 PhD research training should align with the Salzburg principles and the Salzburg II Recommendations, a set of principles and recommendations relating to current good practice in doctoral training.
- 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**<sup>4</sup>. The **commercial and/or industrial**

<sup>1</sup> The European Charter for Researchers can be downloaded from <http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/rights>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.singaporestatement.org/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.fnr.lu/en/Calls.-Forms-Guidelines/General-FNR-Guidelines>

<sup>4</sup> 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.

**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 makers and society.

## 2. The AFR-PhD Call 2014-1

### 2.1. Timing of the Call

Launch of call	December 2013
Deadline for submission	20 <sup>th</sup> March 2014, 14:00 (CET)
Funding decision	July 2014
Latest possible start of PhD project	1st January 2015

### 2.2. Relevant Call Documents

The following relevant documents for the AFR-PhD Call 2014-1 are available on the FNR website:

<http://www.fnr.lu/en/Calls%2C-Forms-Guidelines/Call-Documents/AFR-PhD-Forms-and-Guidelines>:

- AFR Programme Description
- AFR PhD Grants: Application Guidelines
- AFR PhD Grants: General Checklist for the online grant application submission
- AFR PhD Grants: Project Description Form (Call 2014-1)
- AFR PhD Grants: Applicant's and Host Institution's Joint Declaration
- AFR PhD Grants: Terms and Conditions
- AFR PhD Grants: Confidential Reference Report Template
- AFR Evaluation Guidelines for Remote Reviewers and Panel Members (including template for the written evaluation)

Moreover, the following documents are relevant for any research project application ([www.fnr.lu/en/Calls,-Forms-Guidelines/General-FNR-Guidelines](http://www.fnr.lu/en/Calls,-Forms-Guidelines/General-FNR-Guidelines)):

- European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers
- FNR Research Integrity Guidelines
- European Charter Code of Conduct for Research Integrity

## 3. General Principles

### 3.1. Eligibility

#### 3.1.1. Eligible Applicants

The AFR follows a bottom-up approach, **has no thematic limitations and is open to all researchers**, regardless of their nationality.

The AFR has two strands:

- 1) AFR projects carried out in Luxembourg (IN), i.e. more than 50 % of research time is spent in Luxembourg, under an employment contract. Applicants from any nationality may apply under this strand.
- 2) AFR projects carried out abroad (OUT): The FNR offers up to 10 PhD grants per call to researchers abroad, who
  - are either Luxembourg nationals (or political refugees with a residence in the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg), or residents in Luxembourg for more than 5 consecutive years, or
  - collaborate with a Luxembourg company (AFR-PPP); in this case, applicants from any nationality may apply, but at least 25% of the work has to be spent in the company in Luxembourg.

The AFR PhD grant scheme is open to applicants holding a university degree of a recognised higher education institution, allowing them to enter into doctoral training. Please note that Medical Doctor (MD) studies are not taken equivalent to PhD studies are not eligible within the AFR PhD scheme. If an applicant does not hold a degree yet at application stage, she/he must have obtained the degree prior to the start of the PhD research project and, in addition, she/he must join a statement by their current supervisor addressing this issue.

Applicants for the AFR PhD scheme must not be enrolled in the PhD for more than one year or have worked on their PhD project for more than one year, otherwise their application is not eligible.

Applications in the fields of natural sciences, mathematics, IT, engineering and economics have to be written in **English**. In fields where the standard scientific language is French or German (e.g. law, literature, linguistics), applications may be drafted in one of these languages.

#### 3.1.2. Eligible Institutions

The **Host Institution (HI)** is the institution (and the research group) where the AFR beneficiary performs the major part of her/his research work. PhD grants provided by the FNR are aimed at Host Institutions to employ AFR beneficiaries to conduct their research work. The HI must offer scientific guidance and training as well as office and/or laboratory space allowing the applicant to properly carry out the described research project. It is the responsibility of the applicants to find a suitable HI with a competent research group in their field.

The institution hosting a PhD applicant should ensure that it can offer an employment contract for the full duration of the project, i.e. 36 months. The legal maximum for a fixed term contract for researchers in Luxembourg is five years.

The following are **eligible HI for AFR beneficiaries**:

- Recognised research and higher education institutions in Luxembourg or abroad;
- Public bodies or non-profit making associations and foundations<sup>5</sup> in Luxembourg with a research mission and scientific competence in the domains of the project;
- Private companies located in Luxembourg that are active in R&D, in collaboration with a public research institution in Luxembourg or abroad; if private companies intend to serve as HI, they need to provide an accreditation (*'agrément'*) issued by the Ministry of Economic Affairs in order to be eligible (see section "Public-Private Partnerships" for further details);
- Public institutions abroad with a research mission and scientific competence in the domain of the project.

Each proposal must be signed by the person authorised to legally commit the Host Institution of the involved applicant (see 'Joint Declaration').

Besides the HI, there may be up to two '**Collaborating Institutions**'. These are institutions from the public or private sector (within Luxembourg or abroad) with a research mission, where the AFR beneficiary performs a **part** of her/his research, i.e. less than 50 % of the total project time may be spent at a collaborating institution. For the private companies in the framework of a public-private partnership, specific rules and restrictions may apply (section "Public-Private Partnerships"). The collaborating institution will not employ the AFR beneficiary but commits to offer scientific guidance as well as office and/or laboratory space, if applicable.

The PhD awarding Higher Education Institution must either be the Host Institution or the second collaborating institution; it cannot be the third institution of a project consortium.

Collaborations in the project where no supervision or mentoring of the candidate is involved should be listed as "other collaborations" and are not considered as 'Collaborating Institutions'.

## 3.2. Selection Criteria

The AFR applications for doctoral research training projects will be assessed according to the **following selection criteria** as specified in article 3(12) of the law creating the FNR, namely:

1. Scientific/technological quality of the proposal
2. Profile of the applicant
3. Quality of the Host Institution (including PhD supervision/scientific guidance and training)
4. Interest of the research project in the Luxembourg R&D setting

The evaluation of the applications will be carried out by the researchers of the AFR thematic panel group in the respective domains. Currently, the FNR has nominated around 50

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<sup>5</sup> Associations sans but lucratif ou fondations régies par les dispositions de la loi modifiée du 21 avril 1928 sur les associations et les fondations sans but lucratif

experienced external researchers for the 5 AFR thematic expert groups, which cover the following domains: Life Sciences and Environmental Sciences (Group 1); Physics, Material Sciences and Engineering (Group 2); Economics, Law and Social Sciences (Group 3); Humanities and related Social Sciences (Group 4); IT and Mathematics (Group 5). All applicants will receive a written feedback on the arguments that led to the funding decision.

More detailed information about the selection criteria and the peer review process are described in the document 'AFR Evaluation Guidelines for Remote Reviewers and Panel Members' available under [www.fnr.lu/AFR](http://www.fnr.lu/AFR).

### 3.3. Supervision and Training

The **supervision support and training** offered to the PhD applicant as well as **an excellent research framework of the PhD project** are key elements for a successful completion of the doctorate. Supervision support should be tailored to meet the requirements of the individual PhD applicant and her/his development throughout the project. The quality of the supervisor(s) and the research group as well as how the applicants' supervision and training is organised will be ranked in the evaluation.

The AFR PhD project must be carried out under the supervision of at least one qualified researcher formally authorised to supervise PhD theses at a degree-awarding institution. The supervisor shall guide the PhD applicant, by providing regular consultations and drawing the PhD applicant's attention to the content of the PhD regulations. In case a PhD project is carried out under the joint supervision of more than one supervisor/scientific contact, all scientific advisors involved must ensure an adequate and coordinated supervision through joint meetings or report updates. The PhD candidate should take an active role in communicating the progress of the work to the various scientific advisors. The supervisory committee of the thesis, if applicable, should include external experts.

In the application form, a distinction is made between **three types of scientific contacts**:

- PhD supervisor: The PhD supervisor is considered to be the academic supervisor at the PhD awarding institution (university). She/He must be formally authorised to supervise PhDs at the PhD awarding institution.
- Scientific advisor: The scientific advisor is considered to be the researcher supervising the project in an institution which is not awarding the PhD degree and/or who is not formally authorised to supervise PhDs in the PhD awarding institution.
- PhD co-supervisor: A co-supervisor is only considered in the specific case of a joint PhD project between two universities officially awarding the PhD degree ('co-tutelle').

#### Supervision and Training

- Supervision is a key element for a successful completion of the doctorate.
- AFR PhD projects must be carried out under the supervision of at least one qualified academic researcher approved to supervise PhD theses at a PhD awarding institution.
- A main scientific contact has to be named for each research group involved in the project. They have to provide recent CVs, including a track record of their last three supervised finished PhD beneficiaries.
- Training should not only foresee scientific but also non-scientific training, according to the needs of the applicant.

The supervisor and, if applicable, the co-supervisor and scientific advisor(s) shall ensure that the PhD is conducted in accordance with the code of conduct for professional work in the field in question, and without any restrictions on the freedom to publish results that are incompatible with academic freedom. Only persons who play an active role in the applicant's supervision should be listed in the application form as scientific contacts.

The importance of acquiring non-scientific skills in addition to scientific research **training** throughout the PhD period is increasingly recognised. These skills improve the applicants' ability to complete the research project successfully, enhance employability and assist career progress after completion of the doctorate.

While preparing an AFR application, the applicant should conduct an 'analysis of needs' jointly with her/his main scientific contact(s). Based on this, an individual training plan should be set up for the duration of the PhD period. The individual training plan, even though it may undergo modifications throughout the PhD period, is an integral part of the AFR application.

### 3.4. Project Characteristics

#### Calls for application and latest possible project start

The AFR launches **two calls per year**, one in spring and one in autumn. The funding decision will be available 3 months after the submission deadline.

**Latest possible start** for projects submitted in the autumn call is 1st July of the following year. **Latest possible start** for projects submitted in the spring call is 1st January of the following year. The FNR reserves the right to review its funding decision if the start of the project is delayed beyond these dates.

#### Funding duration for PhDs

The AFR funds PhD research trainings for up to **4 years** (3 years, with the possibility of a 1-year extension).

#### Employment contracts and fellowships

**Employment contracts shall be the rule.** AFR PhD Grants are aimed at Host Institutions to employ AFR beneficiaries to conduct their research studies. Fellowships without employment contracts are only awarded outside Luxembourg in the following exceptional cases:

- If the conclusion of an employment contract with the host institution is not possible or
- If an employment contract results in a net salary for the beneficiary below  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the amount received for a stipend.

#### Financial contribution of the AFR PhD grants

For **AFR beneficiaries with employment contracts**, the FNR pays to the Host Institution a maximum contribution to the annual salary costs of **40,154 €/ year** (salary index as of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2014). A topping-up by the employer is possible up to a certain amount. For further details, please refer to the 'AFR Terms and Conditions'.

Beneficiaries of an **AFR PhD fellowship** (without employment contract) will receive monthly stipends of 1,500 €. For further details, please refer to the 'AFR Terms and Conditions'.



The FNR does accept cumulating two grants for living costs of different origin only up to the maximum limit indicated in the Grand-Ducal Regulation<sup>6</sup> (see Terms and Conditions). Researchers who have been awarded a grant for living costs from an external source of funding may apply for AFR fellowship. However, in case of approval of the two grants, the full basic grant is paid by the FNR and the topping-up may come from another source that needs to certify their awareness and agreement with the AFR grant.

### Travel lump sum

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

### 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 of up to **6000 €/ PhD** is available to cover costs (e.g. travel to scientific conferences, conference registration fees). For further details, please refer to the 'AFR Terms and Conditions'.

## 3.5. Private-Public Partnership

The FNR supports researchers who carry out their PhD research training in collaboration with a private company active in R&D in Luxembourg (AFR-PPP).

A financial incentive is paid by the FNR under the AFR-PPP: For **AFR PhD beneficiaries with PPP employment contracts**, the FNR pays to the Host Institution a maximum contribution to the annual salary costs of maximum 44,030 €/year (salary index as of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2014). A topping-up by the employer is possible up to a certain amount. To benefit from the AFR-PPP supplement, i) private companies need to be in possession of an **accreditation** by the Ministry of Economic Affairs<sup>7</sup>, certifying their R&D activities in Luxembourg, ii) the PPP must be indicated in the application, and iii) the specific requirements (e.g. submission of additional documents) must be fulfilled. Later changes will not receive the AFR-PPP supplement. If the accreditation is not available at the call submission deadline, proof must be provided that it has been applied for and the document has to be provided to the FNR at the signature of the grant agreement at the latest. For further details, please refer to the 'AFR Terms and Conditions'.

In order to be eligible for AFR support, the project applied for must be a research study with an element of innovation and the potential to create new knowledge. It should not be a pure engineering project and in any case it must not simply cover the daily operational business of the company. The private company plays an active role in the supervision and the training of the doctoral researcher. There must be at least one scientific/technological expert (scientific contact) in the company, able to actively accompany the beneficiary and the project over time. In addition, the AFR beneficiary is also required to follow academic training in a public research institution. The applicant should spend not less than 10% and not more than 75% of the PhD research period in the company. In case the PhD is awarded at an institution abroad, the applicant should spend not less than 25% in Luxembourg.

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<sup>6</sup> Reglement Grand Ducal A162, 31st Oct. 2008

<sup>7</sup> Loi FNR art 3 (8)



A contract specifying the contributions of each partner to the research project, including an **agreement on Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)**, needs to be concluded between all partners and a summary sheet has to be submitted with the application.

#### AFR Public-Private Partnerships

- Research project is jointly developed by the applicant, the private company and the public partner.
- Research project with an element of innovation and the potential to create new knowledge; in any case it must not simply cover the daily operational business of the company.
- > 10% and < 75% of the PhD research period spent in the company
- Extra funding is granted for AFR-PPP
- Agreement on IPR required => publication of PhD thesis must be possible

The AFR-PPP applications will be processed and evaluated like a standard AFR proposal. The reviewers will take into account that the industrial research projects might have different requirements concerning the dissemination of results. Members of the thematic expert panels working in the private sector ensure an adequate evaluation of PPP applications.

### 3.6. 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 PhD 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 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

<b>Research on Human Embryo/Foetus</b>
Does the proposed research involve human Embryos?
Does the proposed research involve human Foetal Tissues/ Cells?
Does the proposed research involve human Embryonic Stem Cells (hESCs)?
Does the proposed research on human Embryonic Stem Cells involve cells in culture?
Does the proposed research on Human Embryonic Stem Cells involve the derivation of cells from Embryos?
DO ANY OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL?
<b>Research on Humans</b>
Does the proposed research involve children?
Does the proposed research involve patients?
Does the proposed research involve persons not able to give consent?
Does the proposed research involve adult healthy volunteers?
Does the proposed research involve Human genetic material?
Does the proposed research involve Human biological samples?
Does the proposed research involve Human data collection?
DO ANY OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL?
<b>Privacy</b>
Does the proposed research involve processing of genetic information or personal data (e.g. health, sexual lifestyle, ethnicity, political opinion, religious or philosophical conviction)?
Does the proposed research involve tracking the location or observation of people?
DO ANY OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL?
<b>Research on Animals</b>
Does the proposed research involve research on animals?
Are those animals transgenic small laboratory animals?
Are those animals transgenic farm animals?
Are those animals non-human primates?
Are those animals cloned farm animals?
DO ANY OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL?
<b>Research Involving Developing Countries</b>
Does the proposed research involve the use of local resources (genetic, animal, plant, etc.)?
Is the proposed research of benefit to local communities (e.g. capacity building, access to healthcare, education, etc.)?
DO ANY OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL?
<b>Dual Use</b>
Research having direct military use
Research having the potential for terrorist abuse
DO ANY OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL?
<b>Other Ethical Issues</b>
Are there OTHER activities that may raise Ethical Issues?
If YES please specify:

**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.

In **case of multi-national projects**, identify the countries where research will be undertaken and which ethical committees and regulatory organisations will need to be approached during the life of the project.

## 4. Applying for the AFR Call

### 4.1. AFR PhD Application 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**.

In order to be eligible, the **joint declaration** has to be signed by the Host Institution and officially stamped. The signed joint declaration has to be scanned and uploaded **before the call deadline** using the online submission system (FNR Grant Management System) <https://grants.fnr.lu>. **No signed paper version has to be submitted to the FNR.**

**AFR-PHD Submission deadline: 20<sup>th</sup> March 2014, 14:00 CET**

**Late or incomplete applications (including confidential letters of reference) are not eligible!**

The FNR does not accept additional documents submitted after the application deadline. Please note that certain Host Institutions, in particular Luxembourg Host Institutions, have internal rules regarding the submission of AFR applications. They may, for example, require that AFR applications must first be examined and approved by their administration before they can be submitted online to the FNR. In the early preparation stage of the AFR application (and no later than one month prior to the submission deadline), applicants should therefore get in touch with the HI's internal AFR administrative contact to inform her/him of the intention to submit an AFR proposal and to clarify the internal submission procedure. However, in the initial planning stage of an application, the first point of contact for an applicant should be the future supervisor.

The AFR contacts at Luxembourg Host Institutions are:

- University of Luxembourg
  - Administrative contact and general AFR-related issues:
    - Research facilitators of the faculties (see [www.uni.lu](http://www.uni.lu))
    - In addition: e-mail: [afr-ul@uni.lu](mailto:afr-ul@uni.lu)
  - General questions about doing a PhD at the UL:
    - Contact: Virginie Mucciante; e-mail: [virginie.mucciante@uni.lu](mailto:virginie.mucciante@uni.lu)
  - Legal representative: Prof. Ludwig Neyses, Vice-Rector Research
- CRP Henri Tudor:
  - Administrative contact and general AFR-related issues:
    - Nicolas Goffin, e-mail: [Project.office@tudor.lu](mailto:Project.office@tudor.lu)
  - Legal representative: Dr. Marc Lemmer, Director
- CRP Gabriel Lippmann:
  - Administrative contact and general AFR-related issues:
    - Angélique Gobin; e-mail: [gobin@lippmann.lu](mailto:gobin@lippmann.lu) and [servicerh@lippmann.lu](mailto:servicerh@lippmann.lu)
  - Legal representative: Dr. Fernand Reinig, Director
- CRP Santé
  - Administrative contact for project and AFR-related issues:
    - Jo Schroeder, Dominique Mormont [projects@crp-sante.lu](mailto:projects@crp-sante.lu)
  - Administrative contact for employment contract, visa and related issues:
    - Natacha Beicht; e-mail: [natacha.beicht@crp-sante.lu](mailto:natacha.beicht@crp-sante.lu)

- Legal representative/contact for general AFR-related issues:
  - Dr. Jean-Claude Schmit, Director
- CEPS/INSTEAD:
  - Administrative contact and general AFR-related issues:
    - Evelyne Houtmann, e-mail: [evelyne.houtmann@ceps.lu](mailto:evelyne.houtmann@ceps.lu) and [rh@ceps.lu](mailto:rh@ceps.lu)
  - Questions about PhD opportunities:
    - Valérie Baran; e-mail: [valerie.baran@ceps.lu](mailto:valerie.baran@ceps.lu)
  - Legal representative:
    - Dr. Hilmar Schneider, Director

## 4.2. AFR PhD Evaluation

The AFR PhD Peer Review process guarantees an independent, state-of-the-art evaluation of the application with the objective to select the research projects and applicants that reflect **academic excellence**. All proposals will be evaluated according to the four **selection criteria**. Special attention will be given to project proposals that raise ethical and/or data protection issues. 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 within two weeks following the deadline. In case of non-eligibility, the reasons are indicated and the application will not be assessed.
- Eligible proposals are **peer-reviewed** by independent, international researchers of the **thematic expert panel**.
- A **thematic expert panel** rates the proposals and recommends funding.
- The **funding decision** is formalized by the Secretary General before being communicated to the AFR beneficiaries.

PhD applications will be reviewed by the members of the five thematic expert panels. Since these members are from a broad range of disciplines within the four thematic groups and may not have expertise in the precise applicants' area of study (e.g. a physicist, but not a specialist in thermo-physics evaluating a proposal in thermo-physics), **applicants are advised to write their research proposal in plain language**. However, it is expected that the ideas and/or text belonging to others be properly referenced.

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

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](http://www.fnr.lu/AFR).

### 4.3. FNR Grant Management System (Online Submission)

FNR Calls, including the current AFR-PHD 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](mailto:tech-support@fnr.lu) or call our Help Desk at +352 26 19 25 45.

## 5. AFR-PhD Application

The AFR Application for a PhD project consists of **the following elements**:

- The **PhD Online Application Form**: to be accessed and completed online in the FNR's online Grant Management System (<https://grants.fnr.lu>).
- The **PhD Project Description Form (Project Description)** contains detailed information on the proposed research project. A Word file template is to be downloaded and completed off-line, afterwards converted to PDF and then uploaded to the PhD Online Application Form in the Online System. The 'Project Description' cannot be submitted alone.
- The **supporting documentation** (to be uploaded):
  - The **Letter of Intent** is a brief personal statement for the choice of research project and should include a rationale for the institution and the supervisor chosen (no template provided)
  - The **Training Plan** (no template provided)
  - The **Recent Curriculum Vitae for Applicant and all Supervisor(s)/ Scientific Contact(s)** (no template provided)
  - The **Copies of Degree Certificates and Statement of Courses and Marks ('relevé de notes')** (no template provided)
  - The **Description of the Research Framework within the Host Institution (and the Collaborating Institution(s))** (no template provided)
  - The **Joint Declaration** of the applicant and the Host Institution, **signed by the Host Institution** (template provided)
  - **Copy of Passport**
  - **PhD Registration** (if already available)



- If applicable: Additional documents relevant for an application under the AFR-Private Public Partnership (PPP) scheme.
- If applicable: Additional documents in special cases (e.g. fellowship; proof of personal link to Luxembourg, ongoing PhD)
- If applicable: Reference letter for the applicant by former supervisor / scientific advisor (not mandatory, no template provided). Applicants not in possession of a degree allowing them to enter into doctoral training at the relevant call submission deadline must join a statement by their current supervisor addressing this issue.
- The **Confidential Letters of Reference** for the applicant, to be provided by the main supervisor(s) involved in the project. Also, the FNR will have to receive at least one **confidential reference letter** per research group by the main scientific contact of the group. Supervisors / Scientific contacts should use the template of the reference letter provided on the FNR webpage: [www.fnr.lu/AFR](http://www.fnr.lu/AFR). **The letters are confidential and must be sent before the deadline by email by the scientific contact directly to the FNR at [afr@fnr.lu](mailto:afr@fnr.lu)**

If no templates are provided, make sure that you address the specific points mentioned in *“blue italics”* in the sections of the online application detailed in these Guidelines below.

**Incomplete applications (e.g. missing letters of reference) will be turned down without further evaluation!**

An **e-Tutorial** for the Grant Management System is available in the ‘Help’ section of the online submission system and on the FNR website. Information on how to prepare the proposal is given on the following pages in *blue italic characters* inside the forms.

For further advice and support, please contact the FNR-AFR Programme Assistant.

## 5.1. Step 1: Completing the Online Application Form

Step 1 of the AFR PHD Application 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 AFR PHD Project Description Form)**
- **Task 3: Generate a PDF Document**
- **Task 4: Check application for completeness**
- **Task 5: Make sure your Scientific Contact(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 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 ‘Smartform’) 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 7 sections that can be accessed individually:

- **Section 1. Applicant**
- **Section 2. Details on Host Institution and Collaborating Institution(s)**
- **Section 3. Research Project and Project Framework**
- **Section 4. Interest of the Research Project in the Luxembourg R&D Setting**
- **Section 5. Legal and Ethical Requirements**
- **Section 6. Type of Grant**
- **Section 7. 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 section 7 you have to '**Download the AFR PHD Project Description Form**'. This requires you to download a WORD document, named 'AFR 2014-1 PHD Project Description Form'. Please save it to your desktop and complete it off-line. A detailed description of the form is available in the specific section below. The 'Project Description Form' is part of a web-based online application and cannot be submitted alone. The Form is also available on the FNR website ([www.fnr.lu](http://www.fnr.lu)), but make sure you are using the right version (Call 2014-1).

### 5.1.1. Applicant's Details and Language

#### Applicant's Details

- Application ID: *Generated automatically*
- Call ID: *Generated automatically*
- First Name (s): \* *Given name of the applicant*
- Family Name: \* *Surname of the applicant*
- Gender: \* *Male/Female*
- Discipline of Master / Diploma:
- University/Institution Issuing the Master / Diploma Certificate:
- Date of Master/Diploma Certificate: *Issuing date of Master / Diploma certificate. Copies of relevant academic diploma obtained and a copy of the statement of courses and marks ('relevé de notes') of the most recent degree must be submitted. Copies of these documents may be submitted in English, French or German. If in any other language, they must be translated into English, French or German and officially certified. Applicants not in possession of a degree allowing them to enter into doctoral training at the relevant call submission deadline must join a statement by their current supervisor addressing this issue (section 7.9).*
- If applicable: start date of PhD enrolment:
- If enrolled in the PhD for > 1 year, provide proof that project is on-going < 1 year:

*In case the PhD is on-going for longer than 1 year, the application is ineligible, unless the applicant can prove that the project is on-going for less than a year. Corresponding certificates must be uploaded (section 7.9). The FNR checks the proof delivered and provides an answer together with the eligibility check.*

- Date of Birth: \*
- Nationality: \*
- E-mail: \* *E-mail Address to be used for electronic correspondence*
- Did you receive a BFR/AFR grant before? *Yes/No*
- If “yes”, indicate BFR/AFR period: *funding period and reference*

*A copy of the passport has to be attached to the application (section 7.5.)*

## Language Proficiency

- *List all the languages in the first column and indicate with a number from 1 to 5 the degree of your knowledge in speaking, writing and reading/understanding (1=native speaker, 2=excellent, 3=good, 4=weak, 5=no knowledge). \**

To validate this section (1) and jump to the next one, click the button ‘Save draft and continue to next section’!

### 5.1.2. Details on Host Institution and Collaborating Institution(s)

#### Host Institution Details

The ‘Host Institution’ (HI) is the institution where the AFR beneficiary performs the **major part** of her/his research, i.e. at least 50% of the time has to be spent with the Host Institution (unless fieldwork is more than 50% and no other institution is involved). It is the responsibility of the applicants to find a suitable HI with a competent research group in their field.

The HI must offer office and/or laboratory space allowing the applicant to properly carry out the described research project.

The HI is an institution which is eligible to host AFR beneficiaries and which should provide employment contracts to AFR beneficiaries (see Section 3.2. for further details).

Mandatory information:

- Host Institution Details: \* *Please select your Host Institution from the Drop Down List. If your institution is not listed, please enter the name into the Field ‘Name of Host Institution’.*
- Research Group: \* *Official name (and acronym) of the research group in which the research study will be conducted.*  
*A description on the research framework for the PhD study has to be attached in section 7.6 (max. 3 pages / research group), including:*
  - *a general description of the research group;*
  - *an explanation how the PhD fits into the general research objectives and, if applicable, integrates into a larger peer-reviewed multiannual project;*
  - *the organisation of the applicant’s supervision;*
  - *a description how the required material expenses and overheads will be covered.*

*In case the HI is a private company: Objectives of the project from the perspective of the private company and the contribution of the company to the project and to the training/career development of the applicant should also be included).*

- Percentage of Work Time Spent in HI: \*
- Does the HI award the PhD Degree: \* *yes / no*  
*In case the Host Institution does not award the PhD degree, the degree awarding institution has to be mentioned as '2<sup>nd</sup> collaborating institution'.*
- Legal status of the HI: \* *Choose from the Drop Down List (e.g. University; Public Research Institution or Private Company). In the case the Host Institution is a private company, the collaborating public research institution awarding the PhD has to be indicated as '2<sup>nd</sup> collaborating institution'.*
- Address Details of the Research Group: \* *Please provide full address for later correspondence.*
- Internet Site: \* *Enter Internet site of research group.*

## Administrative Contact Details of HI

The administrative contact is the contact person for the AFR contractual and administrative issues. In some cases, the administrative contact may be identical to the legal representative.

In case of a fellowship without an employment contract, the scientific contact may possibly take the role of administrative contact.

Mandatory information:

- Title: \* *e.g. Dr, Prof., etc.*
- First Name: \* *Given name of the administrative contact*
- Last Name: \* *Surname of the administrative contact*
- E-mail: \* *E-mail Address to be used for electronic correspondence*

## Main Scientific Contact Details of HI

In the application form, a distinction is made between three types of scientific contacts: *PhD supervisor, PhD co-supervisor and scientific advisor*. The PhD supervisor is considered to be the academic supervisor at the degree-awarding institution. For **further information** on the requirements expected from the PhD supervision see **section 3.4** (Supervision and Training) in this document.

Only persons who play an active role in the applicant's supervision throughout the entire duration of the PhD should be listed in the application form as scientific contacts.

Note that each supervisor and scientific contact listed in the application form has to provide a CV. In addition, a **confidential reference letter** from the main scientific contact of the Host Institution is **mandatory** (based on the template provided on [www.fnr.lu/AFR](http://www.fnr.lu/AFR)).

Mandatory information:

- Title: \* *e.g. Dr, Prof., etc.*
- First Name: \* *Given name of the administrative contact*
- Last Name: \* *Surname of the administrative contact*
- Research Group: \* *Official name (and acronym) of the research group*
- Role in the Project: \* *Supervisor, Co-Supervisor or Scientific Advisor (see above)*

- E-mail: \* *E-mail Address to be used for electronic correspondence*
- Personal Website: *if applicable*

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Scientific Contact Details of HI

In many institutions, the supervision of PhD applicants is shared between two or more people. The main responsibility for the PhD is taken by the main scientific contact whereas the 'day-to-day' supervision is often done by another person in accordance with the main supervisor (e.g. by a postdoctoral researcher in the research group).

Please give below the details of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Scientific Contact at the HI actively involved in the project, if applicable. Note that each scientific contact listed in the application form has to provide a CV. The Second Scientific Contact may also provide a confidential reference letter but is not obliged to do so (The template for the reference letter is provided on [www.fnr.lu/AFR](http://www.fnr.lu/AFR)).

Mandatory information:

- Title: \* *e.g. Dr, Prof., etc.*
- First Name: \* *Given name of the administrative contact*
- Last Name: \* *Surname of the administrative contact*
- Research Group: \* *Official name (and acronym) of the research group*
- Role in the Project: \* *Supervisor, Co-Supervisor or Scientific Advisor (see above)*
- E-mail: \* *E-mail Address to be used for electronic correspondence*
- Personal Website: *if applicable*

## Collaborating Institution Details

A 'Collaborating Institution' is the institution where the AFR beneficiary performs a **part** of her/his research, i.e. less than 50% of the total project time may be spent at a collaborating institution. A collaborating institution could be for example a university, a public research institution, a public body, a private company, or a foundation with a research mission (see section 3.2). In addition, in case of an interdisciplinary work based solely in one institution, the second research group involved should be indicated as collaborating institution. *Do not add the Host Institution here as this information has already been communicated under the corresponding section.*

*In case the Host Institution does not award the PhD degree, the university or public research institution awarding the PhD degree has to be mentioned as '2<sup>nd</sup> collaborating institution'.*

Mandatory information:

- Institution: \* *Official name of the Collaborating Institution*
- Research Group: \* *Official name (and acronym) of the research group in which the research study will be conducted*  
*A description on the research framework for the PhD project has to be attached in section 7.6 (max. 3 pages / research group), including:*
  - *a general description of the research group;*
  - *an explanation how the PhD fits into the general research objectives and, if applicable, integrates into a larger peer-reviewed multiannual project;*
  - *the organisation of the applicant's supervision;*
  - *a description how the required material expenses and overheads will be covered.*

*In case the HI is a private company: Objectives of the project from the perspective of the private company and the contribution of the company to the project and to the training/career development of the applicant should also be included).*

- Administrative Contact: \* *Name and Surname of the Administrative Contact at the Collaborating Institution. For each institution at least 1 administrative and 1 scientific contact must be added.*
- Scientific Contact: \* *Name and Surname of the Scientific Contact (supervisor etc.) at the Collaborating Institution. For each institution at least 1 administrative and 1 scientific contact must be added.*
- Website of Research Unit: \*
- Does the collaborating institution award the PhD Degree: \* *yes / no*
- Legal status of the collaborating institution: \* *Choose from the Drop Down List (e.g. University; Public Research Institution or Private Company)*
- Percentage of Work Time Spent in collaborating institution: \*

*Click the 'Add' button to validate and/or add new institutions.*

### **Administrative and Scientific Contacts Details of Collaborating Institution(s)**

Enter details of administrative and scientific contacts of each collaborating institution. *For each institution at least 1 administrative and 1 scientific contact must be added.*

Only persons who play an active role in the applicant's supervision throughout the entire duration of the PhD should be listed in the application form as scientific contacts.

Note that each supervisor and scientific contact listed in the application form has to provide a CV. In addition, a **confidential reference letter** from the main scientific contact of each institution is **mandatory** (based on the template provided on [www.fnr.lu/AFR](http://www.fnr.lu/AFR)). Reference reports from the main scientific contact of the Host Institution and the collaborating institution(s) are mandatory.

Mandatory information:

- Name of Institution: \*
- Title: \*
- First Name: \*
- Surname: \*
- Role in the Project: \* *Supervisor, Co-Supervisor, Scientific Advisor (see above) or Administrative Contact*
- Email: \*
- Personal Website:

*Click the 'Add' button to validate and/or add new contacts.*

### **Other Collaborations**

Indicate any other (potential) partners in the project that are not formally collaborating, *for instance potential users of research results or other collaborators in Luxembourg or abroad (for example data providers etc.) that you intend to involve in the project, but are not yet formally involved. Indicate their potential role or interest in the project.*



To validate this section (2) and jump to the next one, click the button 'Save draft and continue to next section'!

### 5.1.3. Research Project and Project Framework

#### Research Project

- Project Title: \* *Should not be longer than 20 words.*
- Project Acronym: \* *The short title or acronym will be used to identify your proposal efficiently. Should not be longer than 10 characters.*
- Project Start: \* *Effective start date of the PHD project. In case the PhD project has already started well before the AFR funding request, the applicant must base her/his project description on the entire duration of the PhD including the already achieved parts and possible changes or reorientations of the project. However, PhD projects that are already running longer than 12 months (date of deadline counts) are not eligible for AFR funding.*
- Project End: \* *Rough estimation of the total project duration.*
- Requested Start of AFR Funding: \* *Effective start date of the funding. Note that the start of the project must occur at the latest on 1<sup>st</sup> July of the following year for proposals submitted in the autumn call and at the latest on 1<sup>st</sup> January of the following year for proposals submitted in the spring call. Otherwise the FNR might withdraw any offer of support.  
Retroactive funding is possible until 1<sup>st</sup> of the month of the call deadline.*
- Total Months of requested AFR funding: \* *Note that PhD projects are normally funded for 3 years (1 year extension possible).*
- Resubmission: \* *Select 'Yes' if the project is a resubmission of a previous AFR project by the same applicant! Please indicate the former reference and title. Please add an additional page to your project description (max. 1 page), where you explain the modifications and describe how the reviewers' comments have been addressed. In addition (if possible), the resubmission should be based on the initial proposal by highlighting in a different colour any changes or additions that were made to the initial version. Please be aware that the re-submitted project will be evaluated by the same standards as "new" applications and in the competition of the new call. Thus, even if all points raised in the first synthesis have been addressed, the project might not be retained for funding.*

#### Project Abstract

- Publishable Project Abstract (max. 300 words): \* *Short summary of your research proposal for FNR use. Note that the abstract is used in the recruitment process of external reviewers and should thus not include any confidential aspects of the planned research project! Furthermore, the FNR will publish the abstracts of successful applications in a project database on the FNR website.*
- Key Words Characterising the Research Project: \* *up to 6 key words that you consider sufficient to characterise the scope of your proposal.*

## Thematic Domain in the AFR Call

Please select only 1 of the following research domains from the list in the online system.

- BM – Life Sciences, Biology and Medicine
- ID – Humanities and Social Sciences
- IS – Information and Communication Technologies
- LE – Law, Economics, Finance
- MS – Materials, Physics and Engineering
- MT – Mathematics
- SR – Environmental and Earth Sciences

## Primary and Secondary Domains of the Research Project

- Level 1: Life Sciences (LS)  
Level 2:
  - LS1 Molecular and Structural Biology and Biochemistry
  - LS2 Genetics, Genomics, Bioinformatics and Systems Biology
  - LS3 Cellular and Developmental Biology
  - LS4 Physiology, Pathophysiology and Endocrinology
  - LS5 Neurosciences and Neural Disorders
  - LS6 Immunity and Infection
  - LS7 Diagnostic Tools, Therapies and Public Health
  - LS8 Evolutionary, Population and Environmental Biology
  - LS9 Applied Life Sciences and Biotechnology
- Level 1: Mathematics, Physical Sciences, Information and Communication, Engineering, Universe and Earth Sciences (PE)  
Level 2:
  - PE1 Mathematical Foundations
  - PE2 Fundamental Constituents of Matter
  - PE3 Condensed Matter Physics
  - PE4 Physical and Analytical Chemical Sciences
  - PE5 Materials and Synthesis
  - PE6 Computer Science and Informatics
  - PE7 Systems and Communication Engineering
  - PE8 Products and Process Engineering
  - PE9 Universe Sciences
  - PE10 Earth System Science
- Level 1: Social Sciences and Humanities (SH)  
Level 2:
  - SH1 Individuals, Institutions and Markets
  - SH2 Institutions, Values, Beliefs and Behaviour
  - SH3 Environment and Society
  - SH4 The Human Mind and its Complexity
  - SH5 Cultures and Cultural Production
  - SH6 The Study of the Human Past

A list with the descriptions of the Level 2 Domains (Subdomains) is provided on the FNR website.

## Project Framework

For AFR projects which will be carried out in the framework of a greater multiannual project (e.g. institution-internal, national, European or international projects), it is essential that the proposal indicates explicitly and unequivocally what the individual contribution of the applicant in the frame of the greater project is.

In case two or more submitted projects are interlinked, it must emerge in a clear and transparent way who does what, who gets the credit for what (in terms of first authorships in publications), if and how a specific research project is affected in case the related proposal is not retained for funding, etc (*see also section 7.6.*).

Mandatory information:

- Project Title
- Funding Institution
- Researcher in Charge
- If FNR funded: *Reference Number*
- Project Start
- Project End
- Project Status: *Tick where appropriate*

To validate this section (3) and jump to the next one, click the button 'Save draft and continue to next section'!

### 5.1.4. Interest of the Research Project in the Luxembourg R&D Setting

#### Interest of the Research Project in the Luxembourg R&D Setting

The interest of the research project in the Luxembourg R&D setting is an essential eligibility and selection criterion.

The personal link with Luxembourg **as eligibility criterion** is only relevant for applicants who carry out their project at a HI outside Luxembourg. Within Luxembourg, applicants from any nationality without an earlier link to the country may apply (for further details see section 3.1 "Eligibility" in this document).

- Will you have an employment contract at a Luxembourgish Host Institution to conduct your research?: \* *YES / NO*
- If **NO**: *Tick where appropriate, multiple answers possible.*  
 Personal link with Luxembourg: *You are a Luxembourg national or a political refugee with a residence in the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg and/or have been a resident in Luxembourg for a minimum of 5 consecutive years. Certifying documents have to be uploaded under section 7.9. and please give additional comments below.*  
 The Project is an *AFR-PPP in collaboration with a public research institution outside Luxembourg; at least 25 % of the project time is spent at the company in Luxembourg.*  
 Additional Comments: *Only required in case of a personal link with Luxembourg*

To validate this section (4) and jump to the next one, click the button 'Save draft and continue to next section'!

### 5.1.5. Legal and Ethical Requirements

#### Ethical Issues and Data Protection

The FNR requests that applicants and their Host Institutions verify the ethical and data protection rules of the countries where they will carry out their research and that they comply with the rules and laws of these countries as well as the rules and laws of the European Union. Where a proposal requires approval by the relevant Research Body Ethics Committee, written evidence of such ethical approval will need to be obtained and available prior to start of that particular part of any successful research proposal (*see section 3.6 (Ethical Issues) of this document*).

- Does the Project give rise to Ethical Issues (including the collection or handling of personal or sensitive data)? *Yes/No*
- Does the Project require approval by a relevant Research Body Ethics Committee (e.g. by the 'Commission Nationale de la Protection des Données (CNPd)' and/or 'Comité National d'Éthique de Recherche (CNER)')? *Yes/No. More info on [www.cnpd.lu](http://www.cnpd.lu) and [www.cner.lu](http://www.cner.lu)*  
*If applicable, approval(s) is/are required before the start of the project.*
- If 'Yes' in one of the above, How will Ethical Issues be Addressed? *If the project gives rise to ethical issues, please briefly indicate what they consist in and how they will be addressed. In addition, the Ethical Issues Table attached to the Project Description Form must be completed.*  
*Ethical issues are not limited to issues indicated in the Ethical Issues Table or handled by the 'Commission Nationale de la Protection des Données' and/or the 'Comité National d'Éthique de Recherche' (see section Ethical Issues). The applicant should contact the department in charge of ethical issues in their institution(s) for support.*
- Does the Project have specific data protection requirements? *Yes/No*
- If 'Yes', please indicate how these issues will be addressed? *If the project gives rise to specific data protection requirements, please briefly indicate what they consist in and how they will be addressed. The applicant should contact the department in charge of ethical issues in her/his research institution for support.*

To validate this section (5) and jump to the next one, click the button 'Save draft and continue to next section'!

### 5.1.6. Type of Grant

#### Type of Grant Requested

The FNR expects that all AFR **beneficiaries hosted at a Luxembourgish institution will receive an employment contract** to conduct their research studies. Applicants hosted in an institution abroad may apply to fellowships. For further information about the AFR contributions, please refer to section 3.4 as well as to the 'AFR Terms & Conditions'.

Applicants need to make sure before submission that the indications in the application form comply with the employment and employment contract rules of the Host Institution.

- Type of Grant requested: \* *Choose one from the list:*
  - Employment contract: *The HI will employ the AFR beneficiary to conduct her/his research studies.*

- Employment contract PPP: *Project will be carried out in or in collaboration with a private company in Luxembourg and the partners want to apply to the AFR-Public-Private-Partnership incentive. The AFR beneficiary may be employed either by the public or private Host Institution. Note that in this case **additional documents** have to be provided in section 7.8.*  
*In case of an AFR-PPP in collaboration with a public research institution outside Luxembourg, at least 25 % of the project time has to be spent at the Luxembourgish company.*
- Fellowship (HI has no possibility to offer an employment contract to grant applicant):  
*For example in a research institution abroad.*
- Fellowship (the employment contract would result in a net salary for the beneficiary below 3/4 of the amount received for a fellowship without employment contract): *For example in countries where social security contributions are very high.*
- Time to be spent on the research project: \* *Full-time / Part-time. Exceptionally AFR beneficiaries have the possibility to undertake their research as part-time. If AFR beneficiaries intend to do their PhD on a part-time basis, a justification has to be provided in annex (7.9).*
- If part-time please specify: *50% or other (higher percentage): the part-time research must not be less than 50% of the normal working time and must comply with the Host Institution's part time policy.*

According to your choice made, please continue with either section 6.2 (in case of an employment contract) or section 6.3 (in case of a fellowship).

### **In case of an AFR-based Employment Contract**

The AFR contribution to an employment contract has to be calculated by the Host Institution's personnel department, on the basis of the indications and documents submitted by the applicant in view of the preparation of the employment contract. Applicants should contact the Host Institution sufficiently in advance to receive the amounts that are required by the FNR in the application form. For further information regarding the maximum AFR contributions and rules please refer to the section 2.5 as well as to the 'AFR Terms & Conditions'. *Enter the figure of the gross salary per month in Euro you will receive.*

The annual salary costs depend on the number of salary-months paid per year. It is not necessarily based on 12 salary months per calendar year. Certain countries apply 13 months as a rule. In Luxembourg, 13 salary months are current practice, but certain institutions may pay 12 months, 12.5 months or > 13 months. *Enter the figure of the full salary costs per month in Euro for the employer (including employers' charges to the social security). Figure to be provided by the Host Institution.*

Did you apply for any other grant for the AFR project period? *Researchers, who have been awarded a grant from an external source of funding for an individual fellowship similar to AFR may apply for AFR grants. However, in case of approval of the two grants, the full basic grant is paid by the FNR and a topping-up of the salary up to the maximum limit indicated in the Grand-Ducal Regulation<sup>8</sup> may come from another source. The other source of funding needs to certify their awareness and agreement with the AFR grant (for further details see Terms and Conditions).*

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<sup>8</sup> Reglement Grand Ducal A162, 31st Oct. 2008

Please indicate hereafter the source of grant, the amount per month or year, the period, the status 'requested' or 'granted'.

### In case of an AFR Fellowship

Did you apply for any other grant for the AFR project period? *Researchers, who have been awarded a grant from an external source of funding for an individual fellowship similar to AFR may apply for AFR grants. However, in case of approval of the two grants, the full basic grant is paid by the FNR and a topping-up of the AFR fellowship up to the maximum limit (25,200 €) indicated in the Grand-Ducal Regulation<sup>9</sup> may come from another source. The other source of funding needs to certify their awareness and agreement with the AFR grant (for further details see Terms and Conditions).*

Please indicate hereafter the source of grant, the amount per month or year, the period, the status 'requested' or 'granted'.

To validate this section (6) and jump to the next one, click the button 'Save draft and continue to next section'!

## 5.1.7. Attachments

### Project Description of the Research Project\*

In section 7.1 you have to '**Download the AFR PhD Project Description Form**'. By clicking on the hyperlink, you can download a WORD document, named 'AFR 2014-1 PhD Project Description Form' that may be saved to your desktop and completed off-line.

The 'Project Description Form' is part of a web-based online application and cannot be submitted alone. **The maximum number of 4 pages should be respected** (excluding the Cover Page, the Bibliography and list of abbreviations (max. 2 pages), the Ethical Issues Table, and Comments in case of a Resubmission (max. 1 page)); **otherwise the FNR may decide to only forward the first 4 pages to the external evaluators.** The **format instructions** given in the 'Project Description Form' have to be respected. After completion of the Word document, please convert it to PDF and upload it into the system. *Only PDF files can be uploaded!*

If you want to replace the file already uploaded, please REMOVE it first, before uploading the new file to the system.

Applicants are advised to write their research proposal in plain language. Members of the selection committee are from a broad range of disciplines and may not have expertise in the applicants' specific area of study.

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 (see AFR Terms & Conditions).

The Project Description should be a **scientifically oriented executive summary of your PhD project**. The research proposal must describe the major work the applicant wishes to pursue: its precise nature, its purpose (research question), the proposed methodology or approach, and the envisaged outcome. In case the PhD project has already started well before the AFR funding request, the applicant must base her/his project description on the

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<sup>9</sup> Reglement Grand Ducal A162, 31st Oct. 2008



entire duration of the PhD including the already achieved parts and possible changes or reorientations of the project. However, PhD projects that are already running longer than 12 months (date of deadline counts) are not eligible for AFR funding. In case the PhD is part of a larger multiannual research project, clearly indicate how the AFR project contributes to the objectives of the greater project. Please also state the applicant's autonomy, in particular in view of the publication of results.

Please find hereafter the explanation of the different fields of the 'AFR PhD Project Description Form':

<b>1. Introduction and Literature Review (Theme)</b>
Give a brief review of the literature in your research field (state-of-the-art), highlighting the scientific interest, the ongoing developments and the contribution you intend to make to the field.
<b>2. Hypothesis and/or Research Objectives</b>
Give a clear definition of the hypotheses of the research project and the objectives to be achieved in a realistic and, as far as possible, measurable form. <i>Statement of the research questions and/or hypotheses: e.g. statement of the problem, purpose, significance of the project.</i>
<b>3. Innovation/Originality + Expected Outcomes</b>
<i>What is the <b>innovation/originality</b> of the research project? What are the expected project outcomes and mid- to long-term perspectives of your research? Briefly describe the purpose of the project and the envisaged outcome; including number of publications foreseen (1<sup>st</sup> author publication expected)</i>
<b>4. Methodology</b>
<i>Present an overview of the methodology (approach) to test the hypotheses and to reach the objectives defined above.</i>
<b>5. Work Plan</b>
<i>Please indicate roughly the different stages of activities (i.e. work packages, milestones) with the corresponding timetable (when?), location (where?) and collaborating research groups (with whom?), preferably in spreadsheet format. A provisional date for thesis submission and/or final thesis examination should be indicated. The work plan must typically be limited to finalise the PhD within a period of 3 years. Exceptions can be made for applicants who participate in an official PhD programme that is initially planned over a period of 4 years (for example PhD schools).</i>
<b>6. Bibliography (short) and list of abbreviations (if applicable) (max. 1 page)</b>
<i>Please indicate the most relevant papers concerning your research question and methodology, as well as the main literature. Please highlight the most relevant 20 publications followed by the list of the other references. Each reference must include the names of all authors, the article and journal title, book title, publisher, volume number, page numbers and years of publications. If the document is available electronically, the website address should be mentioned too.</i>
<b>7. Comment on Resubmission, only if applicable (max. 1 page)</b>
<i>Please add an extra page, where you explain the modifications and describe how the points raised in the panel synthesis have been addressed (max. 1 page, not within the page limit).  In addition, if possible, the resubmission should be based on the initial proposal by highlighting in a different colour any changes or additions that were made to the initial version.</i>

*Please be aware that the re-submitted project will be evaluated by the same standards as “new” applications and in the competition of the new call. Thus, even if all points raised in the first synthesis have been addressed, the project might not be retained for funding.*

*If you want to replace a file already uploaded, please REMOVE it first, before uploading the new file to the system.*

### **Training Plan\***

The FNR requests that the PhD applicant has to provide a detailed training plan for the PhD period, in close collaboration with their supervisor. Any training activity has to be agreed on with the PhD supervisor. *Please attach Training Plan in PDF Format (Maximum 4 pages).*\*

*The plan should comprise:*

- *The training formally foreseen by the programme, if any (e.g. structural programme of courses during the first year)*
- *In addition, any scientific or methodological skills training should be indicated, such as attendance in renowned scientific conferences, participation in summer schools, methodological training courses, etc. Please indicate title and dates as far as known.*
- *Applicants are strongly encouraged to improve their non-scientific skills through appropriate training courses, such as project management, ethics, International Property Rights (IPR), and soft skills such as communication, public speaking, grant writing, ...*
- *Training activities such as courses in the field of the promotion of scientific culture (communication of researchers with the public and other courses) as well as the practice of activities in collaboration with schools, the media, etc. should form part of any training programme of a PhD or postdoc researcher. These activities should also be included into the training plan in the application.*

*If you want to replace a file already uploaded, please REMOVE it first, before uploading the new file to the system.*

### **Personal Statement\***

Please attach a **Letter of Intent** (Maximum 1 page, in PDF Format. There is no template provided). Only PDF files can be uploaded!

*Give a brief personal statement for your choice of research project and include a rationale for the institution, and the supervisor chosen. Please also include any other aspect of your professional or personal background that you consider of interest in the context of this application (scientific or other, e.g. awards, stays abroad hobbies, etc.).* \*

*If you want to replace a file already uploaded, please REMOVE it first, before uploading the new file to the system.*

## Applicant's CV\*

Please upload a **recent curriculum vitae for the applicant** (*Maximum 3 pages, in PDF Format*). *Only PDF files can be uploaded!*

*The CV should also list scholarly publications (if applicable) which have been authored (or co-authored) in bibliographic format appropriate to the discipline. Only peer-reviewed articles, publications or editions should be quoted. Publications at PhD research training starting level are not a pre-requisite. \**

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## Copies of Degree Certificates / Diplomas and Passport\*

Please upload **copies of the requested documents** (*merge all documents in one PDF file*). *Only PDF files can be uploaded!*

*Including:*

### 1. The copy of the last relevant academic diploma obtained \*

*Applicants not graduated (Master / Diplom degree) at the relevant call submission deadline must join a statement by their current supervisor addressing this issue (to be uploaded in section 7.9).*

### 2. A statement of courses and marks ('relevé de notes') of the most recent degree \*

*A statement of courses and marks attained during your degree allowing you to enter into doctoral training has to be attached. In case you have not graduated yet, the statement of the ongoing master / Diplom degree has to be attached. If no official document from the degree awarding institution is available, you should provide a list of courses and marks signed by your current supervisor.*

### 3. Copy of Passport \*

*Copies of these documents (1 & 2) may be submitted in English, French, or German (if in any other language, these documents must be translated into English, French or German and officially certified)*

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## Framework of the PhD project: The Host Institution's and collaborating institution's research group(s)\*

Besides the Project Description (7.1), the description of the research framework of the PhD study forms a very important basis for the evaluation of the application. The quality of the supervisor and the research group as well as how the applicants' supervision and training will be organised will be assessed. Applicants are advised to consult with their supervisors to prepare this section.

*A description of each (research) group involved in the project (max. 1 page per group) plus an overall description of the research framework of the PhD project (max. 3 pages) has to be provided.*

The **description of the (research) group** must be given for the 'Host Institution' and the 'Collaborating Institution(s)'. It should comprise:

- a general description incl. number of researchers, main scientific achievements, scientific collaborations, etc. of the group, and
- an explanation how the PhD fits into the general research objectives and, if applicable, how it integrates into a larger peer-reviewed multiannual project. In the latter case clearly indicate how the AFR project contributes to the objectives of the larger project. Please also state the applicant's autonomy, in particular in view of the publication of the results.

The **description of the research framework** should comprise:

- Details about how the supervision and training of the applicant is organised. In case of a joint supervision, indicate the role of each supervisor and research group involved and provide details on the time spend in each group.
- Indication on the training foreseen and which parts can be covered at the institutions.
- A description how the required material expenses and overheads will be covered. Where the funding decision of a larger multiannual project is still pending, please state if and how the PhD project will be affected in case the funding for the multiannual project is declined.

In case the **HI is a private company**: Describe the objectives of the project from the perspective of the private company. The contribution of the company to the project and to the training/career development of the applicant should also be included. Only in case of a private company, the research group may give names of competitors that should not be contacted as external reviewers for the project.

All these documents (description per research group AND the research framework) are mandatory. Merge all documents in one PDF file, starting with the HI. Only PDF files can be uploaded!

If you want to replace a file already uploaded, please REMOVE it first, before uploading the new file to the system.

## **Supervisor'(s') CV(s)\***

Please upload a **recent curriculum vitae for each scientific contact** in the project into the system (max. 4 pages/CV merged into a single PDF File. There is no template provided). Only PDF files can be uploaded!

Please include:

1. The number of supervised doctoral dissertations as supervisor \*
2. Information about the outcomes of the last three supervised PhDs (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 \*
4. Information on acquired external funding \*
5. List of own most relevant patents, if applicable

Note that FNR will have to receive at least one **confidential letter of reference** per research group named in the application (based on the template provided on [www.fnr.lu/AFR](http://www.fnr.lu/AFR)). Letters of reference from the main scientific contact of the Host Institution and the collaborating institution(s) are mandatory (please note that the main supervisor from the degree awarding institution always has to provide a reference letter). The reference letter must be sent directly to the FNR via e-mail ([afr@fnr.lu](mailto:afr@fnr.lu)), fax or postal mail by the referee and must arrive before the call deadline.

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### **Public-Private Partnership Incentive (if applicable)**

A financial incentive is paid to beneficiaries who are conducting their research in collaboration with an accredited private company active in R&D in Luxembourg. In order to be eligible as an 'accredited' private firm, companies need to have an accreditation ('agrément') by the Ministry of Economic Affairs.

In case you apply for a Public-Private Partnership Incentive, please attach the following documents:

1. Summary (Term sheet) of the contract between a public research body and a private company, including an Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) agreement. *(max. 1 page) It should summarise the essential terms of the agreement in common language. Please indicate how the authorship of the publications and the management and access to the data sets are settled amongst the project partners. Note that normally the PhD thesis (or at least the results of the PhD study) has to be published in reasonable time after the PhD examination. In projects with a potentially commercial orientation, the possibility of using the IPR through patenting or others should be envisaged.*
2. Copy of the official accreditation of the private company by the Ministry of Economic Affairs, if not already submitted to the FNR. *Only to be submitted if the private partner has not already submitted the accreditation in a former AFR application. If the official accreditation is not yet available, proof must be provided that it has been applied for (see section 3.6 of these guidelines).*

Please merge the documents into one single PDF file and upload the PDF file.

*If you want to replace a file already uploaded, please REMOVE it first, before uploading the new file to the system.*

### **Additional Documents**

The following documents are to be submitted only if applicable. *Please merge all required documents for your application into one single PDF file and upload the PDF file.*

**Documents required** in case of:

- Applications hosted outside Luxembourg: *Documents certifying the link with Luxembourg ('Certificate of residence in Luxembourg'; for political refugees in addition, a document certifying their status of political refugee acc. to Art. 23 of the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, signed at Geneva on 28/07/1951)*
- Part-time requested: *Justification (max. 1 page/ PDF format) In exceptional cases, AFR beneficiaries have the possibility to undertake their research as part-time. If AFR*

*beneficiaries intend to do their PhD on a part-time basis, a justification has to be provided indicating the reasons for the part-time request, explaining how the PhD project will be followed and how a finalisation will be ensured. Furthermore, it should be specified if the part-time is scientifically justifiable. Note that you supervisor should comment on the part-time request in the confidential reference report.*

*Further information should be requested from the AFR programme manager in charge of your domain before submitting the proposal.*

- Statement by current supervisor: *Mandatory for applicants not graduated at the relevant call submission deadline*
- PhD registration: *Only if already available; please note that in case of a “co-tutelle” a registration of each involved degree awarding institutions has to be provided.*
- Reference letter for the applicant by former supervisor / scientific advisor: *Applicants may add reference letters of former supervisors or scientific advisor. Please note that such documents are not mandatory (no template provided).*

No other documents should be uploaded in this section. Any excess documents included in this section (esp. as an annex of the project description) will be disregarded during the evaluation.

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### **Project Partner Signatures \***

Download the ‘AFR Applicant’s and Host Institution’s Joint Declaration.pdf’ from the FNR website.

The document has to be completed by the applicant and signed by the legal representative of the Host Institution. In case of a fellowship (without employment contract), the declaration may be signed by the administrative or scientific responsible of the institution authorised to decide upon the acceptance of research fellows by the institution. The position/function of the signing responsible in the Host Institution has to be indicated and the official stamp of the HI must be put on the declaration.

*The signed and stamped Joint Declaration has to be scanned and uploaded to the online submission system.*

*If you want to replace a file already uploaded, please REMOVE it first, before uploading the new file to the system.*

### **Declaration \***

Please tick the box: “I hereby declare that this proposal conforms to the call guidelines and the ‘FNR Research Integrity Guidelines’.”

To validate this section (7) and jump to the next one, click the button ‘Save draft and continue to next section’!



**If you have finished filling in the different sections of your 'Online Application Form',** please click on the button named **'Form fully completed and ready for PDF generation'**. You may as well choose to modify the entered data by clicking on the button named **'Enter more details now'**.

Finally, press the button **'Done'** to validate the completion of the task and make it disappear from your **'To Do'** list.

**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)

Next Step: Submitting the Online Application Form

## 5.2. 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'**.

**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**.

**Incomplete applications, missing letters of reference and/or late submissions will make the application non eligible and the application will be turned down without further evaluation!**

If you need further advice and support, please contact your FNR-AFR Programme Assistant.