

## Bilateral Scientific Research Cooperation Projects

### Between the Research Foundation – Flanders (FWO) and the Russian Science Foundation (RSF)

Guidelines call 2019

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#### Summary:

The Russian Science Foundation (RSF), Russia, and the Research Foundation – Flanders (FWO) announce an initiative to fund joint collaborative proposals in basic research in all fields of knowledge, including social science and humanities.

<b>Closing date for submission of proposals:</b>	April 30, 2019 (5pm Local time)
<b>Maximum duration of the project:</b>	Up to 36 months
<b>Submission of proposals:</b>	Through <a href="#">IAS</a> for Russian investigators and through <a href="#">FWO e-loket</a> for Flemish investigators

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**FWO Announcement of Opportunity:** <https://www.fwo.be/en/fellowships-funding/international-collaboration/bilateral-research-cooperations/bilateral-research-cooperation-russia/>

**RSF Announcement of Opportunity:** <http://rscf.ru/en/main-p-en/>

#### 1. Introduction

Science is increasingly global. Many research questions and “grand challenges” cannot be resolved without cross-border collaboration between scientists. Flanders and Russia wish to invest in joint research projects, creating a leverage for scientific excellence.

This intention will be realized through the implementation of a call for proposals, to be launched jointly in Flanders and Russia.

Each proposal should be an integrated Flemish-Russian research project with both partners from Flanders and Russia who join their strengths to execute a joint research project. Applicants are expected to propose a **coherent research project, in which the added value of both the Flemish and Russian partner, and the complementariness of both teams, is clearly shown**. The research should be carried out both in Russia and Flanders. The partnership should be balanced, not specifically in monetary terms, but with equivalent research commitment and efforts from both sides.

## 2. Scope of funding and duration

Proposals for bilateral research projects between researchers from Flanders and Russia can be submitted in **any scientific domain, as long as it covers basic scientific research**. The projects, all starting on January 1<sup>st</sup> 2020, have a **duration of three years**. Please note that the project duration must be the same on both sides.

## 3. Eligible Researchers

In order to be eligible, a proposal must involve both a Flemish principal investigator (PI) and a Russian PI. On the Flemish side, co-investigators can be included but this is not an obligation. On the Russian side, minimum 3 co-PI's need to be included (1 PI + 3 co-PI's).

### 3.1 Eligible researchers for **RSF**:

Researchers eligible for RSF funding under the scope of this Call must meet the RSF eligibility requirements described in the competition documentation at <http://www.rscf.ru/en/proposals-en>

**In the framework of this joint call with RSF, in addition to the project proposed Russian PI can simultaneously act once as a principle investigator (supervisor) or once as co-investigator (co-supervisor) in other RSF calls.**

### 3.2 Eligible researchers for **FWO**:

- Your research will be carried out at an eligible Flemish main host institution, possibly in collaboration with other Flemish and/or federal research institutions ([Article 7](#)).
- Your research will be carried out under the supervision of a supervisor-spokesperson, possible in collaboration with other (co-)supervisors ([Article 11 and 12](#)).
- **In the framework of this call with RSF, you can only act once as a principle investigator (supervisor) or co-investigator (co-supervisor).**

Projects in the frame of this bilateral call with Russia are not taken into account in the quota of maximum two running or submitted projects one researcher may have within FWO from 2019 onwards, nor are they included in the maximum of two projects for which you can act as a (co-)supervisor per application round.

#### 4. Application procedure

- 4.1 Proposals must be **submitted by the Flemish PI at FWO and by the Russian PI at RSF**. In Flanders it can only be submitted according to the regulations of FWO; in Russia it can only be submitted according to the regulations of RSF;
- 4.2 The **closing date** for the submission of proposals is the **30<sup>th</sup> of April 2019 (5 pm local time for FWO and 5pm local time for RSF)**. No proposals will be accepted after the closing date for submission, nor will any addendum or explanation be accepted, unless those explicitly and formally requested by RSF and/or FWO.
- 4.3 Proposals must be submitted to both agencies through their online systems:  

RSF: The proposal submitted by the Russian PI to RSF (including the documents of his/her FWO collaborator and **letter of acknowledgement** from the Flemish organisation) shall be sent to RSF via the [IAS portal](#). The template of this letter of acknowledgement can be found on the FWO and RSF website.

FWO: The proposal must be submitted by the Flemish PI using the appropriate application form through the [FWO E-portal](#);

All PIs and co-investigators of **both the Flemish and Russian research team** must have an **online profile including an updated list of publications** on the [FWO E-portal](#) before the submission deadline. **Please note that the registration of your login/password takes 24 hours**. It is therefore strongly advised to start well in advance;
- 4.4 The proposal should be clearly integrated and contain one central issue to be investigated, as well as a methodology and an implementation plan. The project description in the proposal submitted by the Flemish and the Russian research team should be identical. The work packages and budget should be specified clearly and separately for respectively the Flemish and Russian part of the project. At FWO the Russian budget (in RUB) must be added in the online application tool by adding the foreign host institution and subsequently allocating budget to it.
- 4.5 After the deadline, FWO and RSF will check whether the proposals have been submitted simultaneously in Flanders and Russia. They will inform each other of the results. If a proposal is submitted only in one country and/or received after the deadline, it will be declared ineligible;
- 4.6 Applicants must note that the funding agencies retain the right to reject applications where they fail to comply with FWO and RSF regulations and/or the procedures/specificities set out in these guidelines.

## 5. Funding modalities and eligible costs

### 5.1 FWO

The Flemish part of the project budget can only be used for one or more of the following cost categories:

- Scientific staff;
- Consumables;
- Equipment;
- Travel and accommodation costs of Flemish researchers going to Russia;
- To cover production costs of joint publications.

In the frame of this bilateral collaboration with Russia the budget for **staff and consumables** on the Flemish side is minimally 45,000 EUR and **maximally 75,000 EUR annually per project**. In case one of the project partners requests only funding for consumables, the lower limit for this partner is set at 20,000 EUR. Per project a maximum amount of €150,000 for equipment can be applied for. Applying for matching funding up to €150,000 is possible. Overhead costs are directly paid to the host institution and should not be included in the FWO budget calculations.

During their stay abroad and travel from and to Belgium/Russia, taking place in the frame of an approved joint FWO-RSF project, all researchers involved on an allocated FWO-RSF project and independent of nationality, can rely on a travel and assistance insurance and repatriation covered by FWO. This insurance is NOT a health insurance. Social security remains a responsibility of the home country.

### 5.2 RSF

The proposals will be processed at RSF according to the rules and instructions specified in the respective competition documentation ([www.rscf.ru/en/proposals-en](http://www.rscf.ru/en/proposals-en)).

In the frame of this bilateral collaboration with Flanders the budget on the Russian side is minimally 4,000,0000 RUR and **maximally 6,000,000 RUR annually per project**.

The budget requested to RSF must follow the regular norms as stated below:

- Remuneration for the project investigators (with allowances);
- Payment for the third party research services;
- Purchase of consumables, services, materials and equipment related to research;
- Research-related travel costs of Russian researchers (To cover accommodation, daily allowances and local travel costs of Russian researchers abroad, including conference fees);
- To cover costs of publications;
- Please be aware that costs associated with travel and staying of Flemish researchers to Russia cannot be covered.

## 6. Application timeline

The call for 2019 will be published in February 2019. The timeline is as follows:

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| • 4 February 2019                        | Opening of the call  |
| • <b>30 April 2019 (5 pm local time)</b> | <b>FWO deadline for proposals</b>                            |
| • <b>30 April 2019 (5 pm local time)</b> | <b>RSF deadline for proposals</b>                            |
| • May-September 2019                     | Eligibility check and peer review                            |
| • Autumn 2019                            | Evaluation separately by FWO/RSF                             |
| • November 2019                          | Joint selection based on rankings and ratification by Boards |
| • December 2019                          | Communication of results                                     |
| • January 2020                           | Start of the projects  |

## 7. Assessment and Selection

### 7.1. Evaluation Procedure

The applicants shall respect the evaluation procedure outlined by FWO and RSF. The projects will be evaluated separately by FWO and by RSF, using a two-step procedure. The rankings of these evaluation will be merged and the projects being evaluated as excellent on both sides of the evaluation will be proposed for funding. The boards of FWO and RSF will thereafter ratify the selection. The Russian part will be funded by RSF according to its own rules and procedures; the Flemish part by FWO according to its rules and procedures.

#### Evaluation at FWO:

1. In a first step, the proposals submitted at FWO will be peer-reviewed by international external referees. The Flemish applicant is requested to provide a list of 10 eligible referees that meet the following conflict of interest regulations. **Please note that there cannot be a conflict of interest between the external referees and both the Flemish and Russian partner(s).** Reviewers must be affiliated to a university, research institute or research department of another organizational type and must be active at least at a postdoctoral level

Not eligible as referee are:

- members of the FWO Board of Trustees;
- [members of an FWO expert panel](#);
- persons appointed to a Belgian university, research institute or any other organization; or, in the case of calls for proposals in the framework of bilateral or lead agency agreements, **persons appointed to similar institutions or organizations in the country (or as specified in the call documents) where the foreign project partner is professionally active;**
- co-authors with the applicant(s) and/or their (co-)supervisor(s) of a publication that was submitted or published after January 1st of the year n-3 (n=year of application) unless the total number of authors exceeds 10. 'Co-authorship' is to be understood as follows:
  - co-authorship of a monography of which the applicant is also the co-author;

- co-authorship of an article or another type of contribution to a collection (book, journal issue, report, congress proceedings, abstract,...) of which the applicant is also the co-author.
- Editors are not regarded as co-authors insofar as they have not also acted as 'co-author' as described above. Co-editors of the applicant are not accepted as external reviewers.
- partners of the applicant(s) in a research cooperation, whether formalised in a research project or not, that has been applied for or has been running after January 1st of the year n-3 (n=year of application). In this context, the following shall in any case qualify as research cooperation (non-exhaustive list):
  - Cooperation under a research fellowship, granted by the FWO;
  - Cooperation under a research project, whether relating to a specific subject or not or under an international cooperation project, granted by the FWO;
  - Cooperation under the Odysseus programme, granted by the FWO;
  - Cooperation under a Scientific Research Network, granted by the FWO;
  - Cooperation under programmes similar to those mentioned above, granted by organisations other than the FWO;
  - Joint research work not formalised in a cooperation structure as defined above;
  - Research carried out in the research domain and/or with research facilities provided by the applicant to the reviewer or vice versa;

In case the applicant(s) doubts the eligibility of the proposed referee, he or she can contact the FWO before submitting the application.

The FWO administration will select the reviewers who will be invited to submit an evaluation in writing of the research proposal and the candidate concerned. The aim is to collect at least two evaluations per application.

2. An ad hoc interdisciplinary evaluation panel comprising of experts selected based on the submitted proposals will evaluate all eligible proposals and allocate the funding.

#### Evaluation at RSF:

1. In a first step, each eligible application submitted to the RSF will be peer-reviewed by 3-5 external referees.
2. The eligible applications with respective review reports will be discussed in group in the RSF expert council panel meeting that ranks proposals in the selected discipline.
3. Interdisciplinary RSF expert council comprising of leading scientists will review the results of the panel group discussions and make funding recommendations pending for the approval by the RSF Board.

#### 7.2. Evaluation criteria

##### Evaluation at FWO:

- International scientific level of the research groups including the composition of the research team
- Complementarity of the included research teams and their expertise
- Methodology
- Originality and innovative nature of the project
- Importance of the project
- Purposefulness of the project
- Feasibility/focus of the project
- Collaboration and coordination between research departments
- Scientific context (appropriateness, expertise, and infrastructure) of the research departments
- Necessity for the budgeted resources

In addition, great importance is attached to the added value of the international collaboration, the complementarity/synergy between the partners, the contribution/coordination of research tasks, and the exchange of researchers.

##### Evaluation at RSF:

The review criteria central for the evaluation of the proposals on the Russian side are:

- Project leader's professional level (assessment of PI's publications, the experience of management of the research projects, educational activities and the qualification of the other research team members, etc.)
- Scientific relevance of the proposed project (assessment of the scientific significance of the project, extent of its scientific novelty, comprehensive nature of the project, complexity and scale of impact, state-of-art, project methods and techniques on account of their adequacy to the project objectives, attainability of the goals envisioned by the proposed project, availability of unique research infrastructure, etc.)

- Significance of the project results (assessment of compliance of the anticipated project results with the world-class scientific standards and requirements, socio-economic applicability of the anticipated project results, level and quality of expected publications, engagement of the young researchers, etc)
- Quality of the project planning and design (assessment of the project leader's capacity to ensure effective management of the research project proposed, project implementation, team composition and equipment purchase plan on account of its comprehensiveness and adequacy to the project goals and objectives)
- Value-added from international cooperation.

## 8. Intellectual properties

Upon final approval of the project proposal, a **partnership agreement** between the research institutions is recommended, laying out topics such as Intellectual Property Rights. (Please note that no specific format for this agreement will be provided by FWO or RSF). The involved host institutions are free to elaborate such a document as long as it contains the necessary basic information)

## 9. Contact information

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