



Brussels, 25 November 2011

## BACK TO BELGIUM GRANTS

### Initiative aiming at encouraging the return in Belgian research centres of young researchers residing abroad

#### Information note

1. Goal of the initiative

- Promoting the return in Belgium of young and highly qualified researchers/scientists living abroad, in order to valorize their expertise and reinforce the national S&T-potential.

The Back to Belgium Grants are co-funded by the European Commission (FP7-PEOPLE-COFUND-2008, as a Marie Curie Action).

2. Target group

- Scientists of high level, and working in research centres abroad, at the time of their application.

The stay abroad must be of a post-doctoral nature, and of a minimal duration of 2 years, whatever the country (intra- or extra-EU):

- to be eligible, the candidates will either be of Belgian citizenship or have stayed at least 3 years in Belgium, for R&D or educational (higher education) activities, before their post-doctoral stay abroad;
- the 2 years period is calculated from the date of entry in the research centre abroad until the date of return in Belgium.

3. Duration of the grants

The Back to Belgium grants attributed to the researchers have a maximal duration of 24 months.

#### 4. Host units

The research units in Belgium that can welcome researchers in the framework of this initiative are the research teams concerned, **among others**, by the inter-university attraction poles (IUAP's) or the research programs funded by the Federal authority, or belonging to a Federal Scientific Institution.

#### 5. Application procedure

The candidates will send the official application form to the Belgian Science Policy. The applications should be introduced by the researchers together with the host institution and will contain a detailed description of the expertise of the candidate, of the proposed research and of the added value for the host unit.

For 2012, the foreclosure date is **Monday 27 February 2012, before 16.00**.

The procedure is the following:

- a paper copy of the application form, with the required signatures, and with the appendices AND the recommendation letters, **MUST** be sent to BELSPO / 231 avenue Louise / B-1050 Brussels.
- an electronic version, with the appendices but without the recommendation letters, **can** also be sent by e-mail to [bernard.delhausse@belspo.be](mailto:bernard.delhausse@belspo.be).

#### 6. Evaluation and selection

The selection is made by an international, multidisciplinary and inter-university jury of experts, chaired by the President of the Belgian Science Policy, or his representative.

The selection criteria are, among others:

- the scientific level of the candidate (CV, publications...);
- the proposed research project and its feasibility
- the concordance of the project with the expertise of the candidate and with the on-going research projects in the host unit;
- the post-doctoral expertise acquired abroad;
- the possible use of this expertise and its added value from the point of view of the host unit;
- the integration and the career perspectives of the candidate.

The jury will also consider the motivations of the candidates on his return to Belgium.

The funded candidates will begin their research activities in the host unit not later than 1 year after the foreclosure date of the applications, namely the 26 February 2013.

## 7. Financial conditions

Financially, the Back to Belgium grants involve:

- a wage, equivalent to the one afforded to a “first assistant” (wage scale SW21) belonging to the scientific personnel of the Federal Scientific Institutions, and adapted to take the seniority of the researcher into account (according to the Royal Decree of 25/2/2008 concerning the status of the scientific personnel of the Federal Scientific Institutions, in modification of the Royal Decree of 21/04/1965);
- a unique travel allocation of 1,250 EUR for the return in Belgium of the researcher;
- a research credit of 12,500 EUR per year, to be used by the researcher inside the host unit.

The researcher is hired by the host institution. The wages and research expenditures are first paid by the institution and then reimbursed to the institution by the Belgian Federal Science Policy. This will be done on a quarterly basis, after presentation of the original relevant documents.

## 8. Reports

At the end of the first year, the researcher is expected to deliver an intermediary report on the evolution of the research project, in collaboration with his/her promoter.

At the end of the Back to Belgium grant, a more exhaustive report will be delivered on the findings and on the added value for the research programme to which the research is connected and for the host unit in general. The report, including the promoter's appreciation, will also mention the perspectives of integration of the researcher in the Belgian scientific milieu.

If needed, a separate report on the respect of ethical rules will be asked at the end of the research project.

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Please note that this information note has no official character; it is a translation of the two official notes in French and Dutch. The official notes and the application form can be found on the Belspo website: [www.belspo.be](http://www.belspo.be).