

Directives concerning the use of resources from the Innovation and development fund for the financing of research projects aiming at the incorporation of a start-up company or at the development of a young start-up company

Art. 1 Purpose

¹ The University of Fribourg (UniFr) wishes to encourage innovation and the creation of start-ups through a specific program by providing funds (grants) from the UniFR's Innovation and Development Fund (IDF) to start-up projects (the Start-up Grant Program).

² These directives specify the procedure for allocating funds (grants) from the IDF to be used for research projects at UniFr, aiming at the incorporation of a start-up or the development of a start-up recently incorporated (maximum 24 months prior to the application submission deadline).

³ Start-up project means a 12-months project submitted by candidates within the Start-up Grant Program.

Art. 2 Awarding of the start-up grant

¹ The Rectorate will award, with consideration of the Committee's recommendation, the start-up grant to the selected start-up project(s), respectively to the corresponding project leader.

² The major part of the grant is allocated to the salary of the project leader, who will be employed at UniFR.

³ The deliberations of the Rectorate and of the Committee are confidential and the awarding from the Rectorate is not subject to appeal.

Art. 3 Application Process

¹ The Knowledge and Technology Transfer Service (KTT) manages the application process and provides an application form.

² Only completed applications that meet the requirements for participation (Art. 4) will be considered.

³ Applications must be submitted within the deadline on the 30th of September by using the application form. A second deadline can be decided by the Rectorate.

Art. 4 Requirements for participation

¹ Candidates must be either members of the UniFR community (employees, students or continuing education students), or alumni of the UniFR who have a start-up project.

² Can be considered as an alumnus of the UniFR anybody who has been member of the UniFR community, for example, who has a diploma from the UniFR, has studied at least 4 semesters at UniFR, has been employed as a Post-Doc at the UniFR, or has been part of the staff member at the UniFR.

³ The start-up projects:

- a) have to aim at the incorporation of a start-up or at the development of a start-up recently incorporated (maximum 2 years from incorporation prior to the application submission deadline);
- b) have to respect the ethical rules and the institutional rules of the UniFR;
- c) have to be applied research projects and not fundamental research;
- d) should not have entered the market yet (no sales of products or services to clients within the project).

⁴ The department, to which the start-up is attached or emerging from, shall agree to give space and access to the equipment and facilities of the UniFR (a letter of support from the president of the department and from the laboratory/group head is required). Additionally, the administrative director of the UniFR as well as the dean of the faculty and the president of the section concerned/involved must approve the use of the facilities in a written consent.

Art. 5 Selection/Evaluation criteria

The selection/evaluation criteria of the start-up projects are the following ones:

- a) Innovation degree;
- b) Economic potential and societal impact;
- c) Feasibility;
- d) Quality of project set-up.

Art. 6 IT Equipment and Software

As a UniFR employee, the project leader will have access to IT equipment and software in accordance with the applicable regulations.

Art. 7 Amount of the start-up grant

¹ For each start-up project, a maximum of CHF 150'000.- may be disbursed, with this amount being a one-time allocation per project.

² There is no entitlement to a start-up grant, and financial support may be granted within the scope and subject to the availability of the funds.

Art. 8 Eligible expenses

¹ The intention of the directive is to finance research projects at UniFR that aims at becoming companies or research projects in collaboration with start-ups. The start-up grant is awarded for one year and the eligible expenses are:

- a) The salary of the project leader or of the project participant (within a corresponding employment contract with the UniFR, in accordance with its salary policy and in any case the major part of the allocated amount);
- b) Employer's contributions (21% approx.) will be deducted from the start-up grant by the human resources service of the UniFR;
- c) The purchase of equipment or consumables dedicated to the project;
- d) Services or consultancy.

² The costs of setting up the share capital of the start-up, services and consultancy by the start-up, or purchases of equipment for the start-up are not part of the eligible expenses. Salaries that are already covered by other sources are not eligible expenses.

Art. 9 Intellectual Property

¹ Start-up projects seeking to apply for the grant must fulfill a crucial prerequisite regarding their intellectual property (IP). Specifically, the applicants must disclose their technology to the Knowledge and Technology Transfer Service (KTT) through a formal Invention Disclosure before applying to the grant. This disclosure, conducted via the Invention Disclosure Form (Form), is a mandatory step that must be completed before applying for the grant. This Intellectual Property must originate in whole or in part from the UniFR. The Form is available on the KTT website.

² The Intellectual Property generated within the start-up project during the year of the start-up grant must also be disclosed to the UniFR using the Form as soon as it is developed.

³ The Intellectual Property generated during the start-up project is owned by the UniFR and will be managed by the UniFR according to the Guidelines for start-ups at UniFR. In line with these guidelines, it is required that a licensing agreement be concluded between the UniFR and the start-up company at the end of the project to license eventual patent applications and the eventual know-how generated during the project.

Art. 10 Reporting and records

¹ The project leader provides the KTT with 2 reports describing the results obtained with the start-up grant. The first short report (max. 6'000 characters with feedback on Milestones and Deliverable) must be submitted six months after the award of the start-up grant and the second (max. 30'000 characters with feedback on Milestones and Deliverable) is due after twelve months.

² In the event of termination or significant changes to the start-up project during the year after the award of the start-up grant, the project leader agrees to inform immediately the Rectorate and the KTT and to refund the amount of the start-up grant that has not been used.

³ The project leader records all results relating to the start-up project in a laboratory notebook to which the Rectorate and KTT will have access whenever deemed necessary.

Art. 11 Commitments

¹ The project leader undertakes:

- a) to provide, upon request and to the KTT, information about the start-up project;
- b) to accept that the UniFR refers to the start-up project in its internal and external communications;
- c) to accept that the UniFR use his/her image and name for the purpose of promoting the technology transfer activities of the UniFR;
- d) to acknowledge the support of the UniFR and his/her affiliation with the UniFR by using the official UniFR logo when presenting the start-up project.

² The project leader authorizes the UniFR to store and use his/her personal data (name, first name, date of birth, telephone number, private address, email address, photos...) and to communicate them to third parties, in particular for the purpose of registering intellectual property rights.

Art. 12 Compliance with the Directives

¹ In the event of non-compliance with these Directives, the Rectorate reserves the right to cancel the start-up grant and/or to take suitable measures.

² In the event of non-compliance with these Directives, the project leader has to reimburse the amount of the start-up grant that has not been used.

⁴ There is no possibility of appealing the decisions of the Rectorate.

Art. 13 Income from commercial exploitation – Repayment to the UniFR

The project leader will personally do everything to ensure that, in the case of later considerable commercial success, the funding received will be repaid to the UniFR.

Art. 14 Committee

¹ Applications will be reviewed by a committee (the Committee).

² The Committee members are:

- a) For the UniFR:
 - i. a representative for each faculty;
 - ii. a representative for the Rectorate;

- iii. the members of the Intellectual Property Board (IP Board) of the UniFR;
- b) A representative of Seed Capital Fribourg;
- c) The director of Capital Risk Fribourg Ltd.

³ The Committee members are appointed for a four-year term.

⁴ The Committee members who are not employees of the UniFR must agree to participate in the Committee and have to sign a non-disclosure agreement.

⁵ The representatives serving on the IP Board are also permitted to take a seat on the Committee as representatives for their affiliations: faculty, Rectorate, Seed capital Fribourg, or Capital Risk Fribourg Ltd.

⁶ The representatives of the faculties (art. 14 para. 2 let. a) are proposed by the faculty they represent, according to the modalities set by the statutes of their faculty. They are designated by the Rectorate. The Rectorate designates its representative.

⁷ The presidency of the Committee will be held by the representative of the Rectorate.

⁸ The presidency can, if necessary, invite an expert in the field of the research.

Art. 15 Committee evaluation and recommendation

¹ The Committee will make a pre-selection of the submitted start-up projects and will invite the concerned project leader(s) for an oral presentation.

² In the pre-selection, each Committee's member will evaluate the projects according to the evaluation criteria, give a grade from 1 to 4 (1 lowest, 4 highest) for each criterion with a short explanation and give a final recommendation to approve or not approve the financing of the project. The KTT will collect all evaluations and call the projects leader that received 50% or more approvals by the Committee's members to present in front of the Committee.

³ Based on the results of the pre-selection and of the oral presentation(s), the Committee will make a recommendation to the Rectorate concerning the awarding of a start-up grant(s) to the best start-up project(s).

Art.16 Management of the startup grant program

¹The KTT will manage the Start-up Grant Program.

² The KTT will transmit annually a report regarding the utilization of the Start-up Grant to the Rectorate.

Art. 17 Entry into force

These Directives come into force with their adoption by the Rectorate.

Adopted by the Rectorate on the 8th of July 2024.