Reporting Guidelines for FNR-funded Projects

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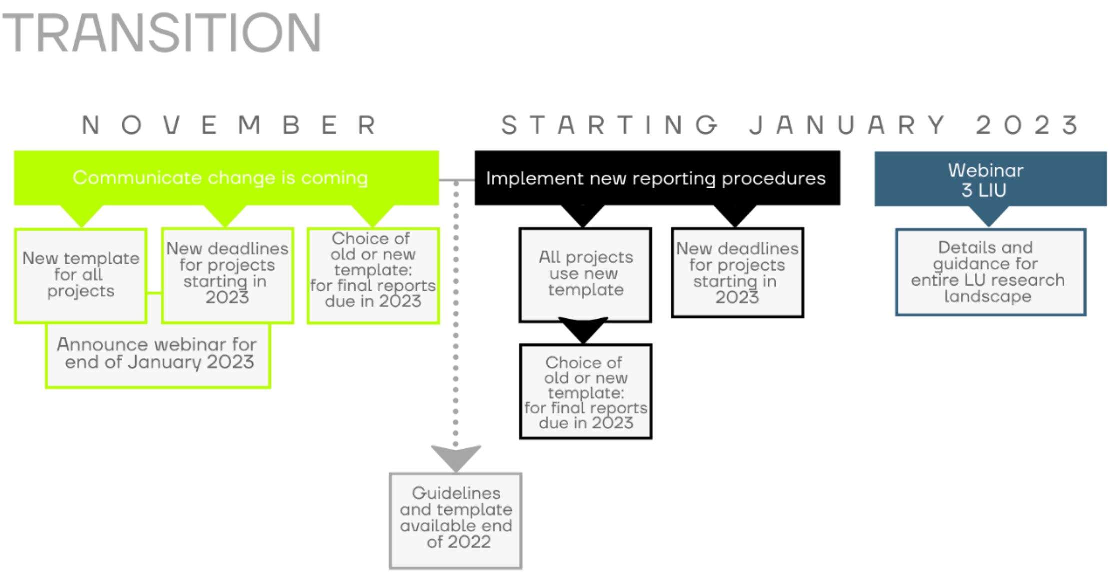
Last update: May 7, 2024

NOTE on transition from the old reporting process to the new reporting process:
The present guidelines are **valid as of January 1st 2023** and are applicable for **all FNR-funded** projects.

- There will be **new reporting templates and timeframes for all projects with a start date after January 1st, 2023**. These new reporting guidelines prevail over the existing documents.
- For **projects which have started before 2023**, the **new reporting templates** will be used, but the **submission deadlines for the reporting remain** as mentioned in the FNR Grant Management System. The only **exception** to this is projects submitting a **final report in 2023** – If the final report process is started on the FNR online grant management system before January 1st, 2023, the old template will be used. Below is a figure describing the transition phase:



Introduction - What is the goal of FNR's reporting?

As a custodian of public funds, we at the FNR need to be able to understand and justify the use of taxpayer money to support research and scientific outreach activities in Luxembourg. In line with our mission of supporting a sustainable world-class research system, as well as our strategic priorities, project reporting helps us to achieve our aims and should underline our role as a main pillar of support for the research and science communication ecosystem.

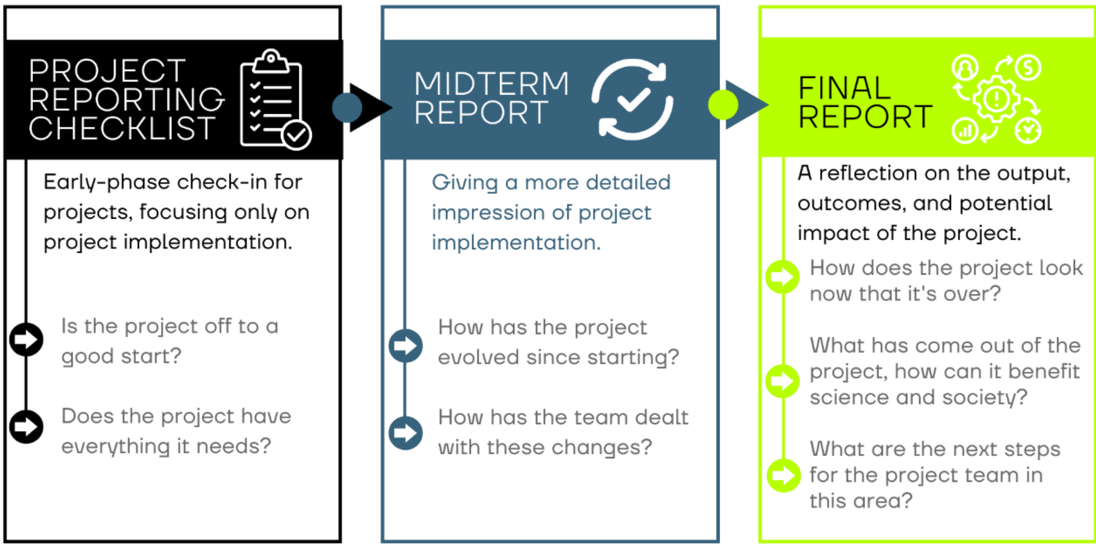
Different parts of the project life cycle serve different purposes. Where evaluation is the quality control, which makes sure that we are funding the best research and outreach projects possible, reporting is about supporting the granted project to make it as successful as possible, providing flexibility, while at the same time ensuring quality in execution. It is the FNR's goal to maximize the success of each project we fund together with the project team, and through fostering a reflective rather than output-focused reporting process, we want to build trust between the FNR and all actors in the research and science communication ecosystem.

In addition, in line with the view that a broader set of research output and outcomes should be recognized and rewarded, reporting of research and outreach projects should serve as a platform for a project team to highlight the various ways that they have contributed to science and society. This is aligned with the individual narrative profiles introduced specifically for research proposal evaluation, aligning what we want to see in the research we fund with what we expect to come out of our funded projects and programmes.

The project reporting process is divided into a maximum of three components, which are a part of a single online form. This allows for a simple viewing and follow-up of previously completed reporting for both the project team and the FNR, reducing the difficulty of completing and reviewing the report:

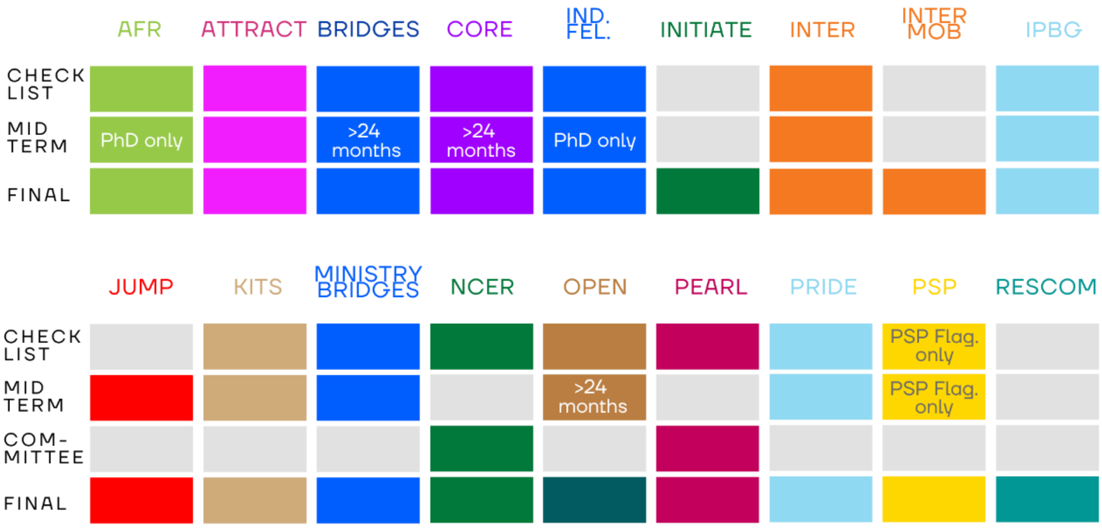
- A "**Project Reporting Checklist**" – for understanding the implementation of a project's early stages
- A "**Mid-term Report**" – for providing a status update on project implementation, and how it is evolving from the initial proposal. The FNR can then give feedback if necessary and support the project team in maximizing the success of the running project.
- A "**Final Report**" – for providing a reflection on the project, including how it fits into the project team's research or outreach focus, impact on the larger research domain(s) and/or society, and output/outcomes that have been produced by the project. This report will be evaluated to give feedback to the PI and project team.

Please note: any major changes to the project – as defined in the grant contract – will need to be reported to the FNR separately (*i.e.* outside of the standard reporting process) and may require express approval from the FNR and/or amendment of the grant contract.



Reporting requirements for the different FNR programmes

Each of the FNR's funding schemes require some or all of the different components of the reporting process, depending on the duration and scope of the scheme. The table below summarizes what is required for each scheme, where the filled boxes represent a requirement for reporting:



Most projects up to 24 months do not require a mid-term report, as shown in the above figure, and only the Project Checklist and Final Report will be requested. In several programmes, a committee evaluation is part of the reporting process, in the form of a Steering Committee, Scientific Advisory Board, or similar. The shape and purpose of the committee evaluation can vary depending on the programme. For more information, see the relevant section and the specific guidance for individual programmes.

When a project extension is requested, information about the evolution and change of the project requiring the extension will be requested (and will act as a proxy mid-term report). For more information, see the section on extension requests below.
For all programmes, the reporting form will be a single unified online document in the FNR grant management system. At each stage, the part of the form corresponding to the current report will be visible, along with all previously completed data as a reference. In this way, the project team and the FNR will be able to have a complete overview of the project reporting.

Reporting deadlines and extension requests

DEADLINES	31 JAN	31 MAR	30 JUN	30 SEP
PROJECT CHECKLIST*		IF START DATE BEFORE 1 JULY		IF START DATE AFTER 1 JULY
MID-TERM REPORT**		IF START DATE BEFORE 1 JULY		IF START DATE AFTER 1 JULY
FINAL REPORT*** If contract end between	1 JUL - 30 SEP	1 OCT - 31 DEC	1 JAN - 31 MAR	1 APR - 30 JUN

*In the year after project start
**Year to submit – Half the full length of project (contract end date)
***Year to submit – based upon contract end date

ALL DEADLINES INDICATED IN GRANT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The above figure summarizes the reporting deadlines for the different parts of the FNR reporting process. For the Project Checklist and Mid-term Reports, there are two annual deadlines, depending on the start date of the project. For the Final Report, there are four annual deadlines, depending on the contract end date of the project, which will allow for a minimum of three months to prepare the report. For every project, the exact deadlines for each report required will be listed in the FNR Grant Management System.
Cost-neutral extension requests can be submitted when the project team feels that it is required to maximize use of the project funds, or in other instances where the team feels it is required. To request an extension, the request should include information answering the following questions:

- How has the project evolved from the original proposal?
- Why have these changes been necessary, and what have you done to deal with these changes?
- What kind of extension is requested and why is this extension required?

All extension requests must align with the guidelines of the specific programme, and the FNR is responsible for final approval of project extensions. In the event of an extension, reporting deadlines will be adapted accordingly in the contract amendment.

Guidance for reporting project implementation and progress

It is important for the FNR that running projects and programmes are as successful as possible and have all of the support needed to run smoothly. For this, discussing project implementation and progress in reporting is crucial to understand how the project fits into the local, national, and international research or outreach landscape, and how the FNR can help to maximize its success.
Research is inherently dynamic, and goals can change based on experimental results, a shift in the field, availability of new equipment, or many other reasons. The same holds true for science outreach activities, which sometimes have to be adapted to external circumstances. In all reporting to the FNR, we want to understand how changing conditions, new results, or other aspects have led to an evolution of your research or outreach project, as well as how you have dealt with these changes. Technical details of the project are not necessary, unless they can be used as an explanation for larger project changes.

Guidance for reporting project outputs

The FNR expects that project teams strive to produce high quality outputs from our grants but would like to underline that there are a very diverse range of outputs that should be recognized. In addition, all results and outputs that are able to be disseminated to the community in an open way should be (e.g. data in open repositories, publications in open access journals, etc.). When discussing project outputs, avoid adding unnecessary data, graphs, charts, or other experimental results. These are best presented and evaluated through publications (including pre-prints) and other peer-reviewed output. Instead of presenting results in the reporting, the FNR suggests placing important research data and results in open repositories (e.g. pre-print servers, data repositories, peer-reviewed journals), and adding links or DOIs to these resources. This can easily be done through keeping the ORCID profiles of the project team up-to-date. For outreach projects, consider showcasing your main outcomes on your project's website and provide a link.

While traditional outputs (e.g. publications, conference contributions, and similar) are important, project reporting should include a broader range of achievements and outputs. In the reporting template, there is space to describe this broader range of output, both in the free-text section and through providing links to items that are not part of the published scientific record.
Reporting of outputs should be related to the broad areas listed below but should be tailored to the projects as well. There is no need to cover all of the areas if they are not applicable to the project. For example, projects focusing more on outreach (e.g. PSP Classic/Flagship) will have fewer outputs around generation of hypotheses but more in other areas. In addition, the list of examples listed in each section is non-exhaustive.

Contribution to the generation and dissemination of new knowledge, ideas, hypotheses, tools – explaining how the project has contributed to generating new knowledge, as well as key skills used to develop ideas and test hypotheses. This encompasses how the project has disseminated ideas and research results, as well as funding (FNR or otherwise) and awards that you have received in relation to this project. Relevant scientific outputs can be highlighted with a description of why they are relevant and considered in this context. Outputs can include datasets, software, publications, commercial/ entrepreneurial/ industrial products, educational products, clinical practice developments, policy publications, and other similar items. If an output has a DOI please only include this. Scientific outputs should be examples of rigorous science following high standards, that are reproducible, and others can build upon. Please indicate to what extent these outputs have been made openly available to the research community and to potential users of research outputs (e.g. policy bodies, private companies, society, etc.).

Contribution to the development and sustainability of research teams and individuals – highlighting outputs critical to the success of other individuals, either within the project team, part of a collaboration, or through mentorship. This can include project management, team support, teaching activities, and supervision. It can be used to mention support provided to the advancement of colleagues (junior or senior), establishment of local/national/international collaborations (including interdisciplinary). Examples of strategic leadership, directing a team, organization, company, or institution are also relevant. It is important to discuss how the team is developing on the project, and any group or individual advancement should be discussed through project reporting.

Contribution to the wider research and innovation community – engagement to progressing the local and international research community. This can include invited and accepted dissemination activities at scientific conferences, commitments including editing, reviewing, refereeing, committee/panel work and the project team's contribution to the evaluation of researchers and research projects. It can highlight contributions to increasing research integrity, and improving research culture (gender equality, diversity, mobility of researchers, and reward/recognition of researchers' broad range of activities, open science initiatives). It can be used to mention appointments to positions of responsibility such as committee membership and corporate roles within the department, institution or organisation, and recognition by invitation within the research sector.

Contribution to broader society – emphasizing societal engagement, scientific outreach, and knowledge exchange. It can include engagement with industry and the private sector, as well as engagement with the public sector, clients, and the broader public. It can be used to highlight positive stakeholder feedback, inclusion of patients in processes and clinical trials, and other impacts across research, policy, practice, and business. It can be used to mention efforts to collaborate with particular societal groups. It can be used to highlight efforts to advise policy-makers at local, national, or international level and provide information through the press and on social media.

Financial reporting and budget shifting

For all financial rules and details, please refer to the general FNR financial regulations, which give more information on the specific requirements for each funding scheme. Payments over the course of the project will only occur at the mid-term (where applicable) and final report stages and will be released upon validation of the report by the FNR.

In both the mid-term and final report, the total costs from the beginning of the project to each reporting period as well as a free-text justification of budget spent should be provided.

- For the first reporting deadline (31 March), the total costs from the beginning of the project until 31 December of the calendar year before the reporting deadline should be given.
- For the second reporting deadline (30 September), the total costs from the beginning of the project until 30 June of the same calendar year as the reporting deadline should be given.

The goal is to keep an overview of spending on the project and help support each project team when action is required (e.g. Budget shift requests or similar). For budget shifts, please check the FNR financial regulations document as well as the budget shift document to see if they are required.

Monitoring of the project team

The project team is the group of individuals (both active researchers and support staff) responsible for the daily activities of the running project. In order to understand how the project team develops and changes over the course of the project, the reporting process includes a free-text table to provide updates on the staff working on the project. Information on all staff associated with the project should be given, including names, positions, person months worked on the project, ORCID (for the researchers) and the institution they work for (in the event of collaborative projects). This table should be filled in with the project reporting checklist and updated at each reporting period. The aim is to provide a full picture of staff development on the project, so any important changes in the project team should also be reported in this section.

Monitoring of PhD candidates

To fulfil our obligation for the accountability of publicly funded doctoral candidates, all doctoral candidates within FNR-funded projects (whether on individual grant or on project grant, funded by the FNR or by another source) must be listed in the online project reporting template, in the "PhD Monitoring Table". For PhDs on individual grants (AFR, IF), this information is filled in by the candidates themselves. For PhDs funded via other projects, this information is filled in by the project PI or an administrator assisting with the reporting, but the PhD candidates must give their informed consent that their information is correct and up to date. In case of dropouts or successful termination of candidates, their data **must not be deleted** from the table. Any updates of the candidate's progress should be provided in the free-text section of the reporting process. In addition, changes to the PhD candidates status (e.g. termination or drop-out) should be mentioned in the free-text section of the report.

In parallel to the reporting, the FNR is running a longitudinal data collection on FNR-funded PhDs to better understand the aspirations, motivations, and challenges of early career researchers, and how these impact the candidates' career trajectories. Hereto, the department of "Science on science" of the FNR (which focused on research) reaches out to the candidates to complete specific surveys at different stages of their PhD (beginning, mid-term, end), as well as several years after PhD completion[1]. It is therefore important that a valid email address is given in the PhD Monitoring Table. The data collected through these surveys is used for research purposes only and is not used in the FNR reporting or any evaluation processes.

Details on the reporting stages

The below information is valid for the majority of FNR programmes. Certain programmes, such as PSP and RESCOM, have different wording in their templates or require different guidance. For these programmes, please see the applicable section in this document for the applicable programme.

The Project Reporting Checklist

What is the goal?

The Project Reporting Checklist is an early-phase check-in for projects, focusing only on project implementation. The purpose is to make sure that the project is off to a good start, and everything needed for the project is in place (or at least in the process of being finalized) – e.g. personnel, ethics

[1] This longitudinal data collection is expected to substitute the contractual requirement for institutions to provide an update on the employment history of funded PhD candidates at the term of six years following the end of the contract.

approvals, IPR agreements, etc. It should be submitted in the year after the project start and can be updated in later reporting periods.

Guidance for filling it out

There is a short list of checklist questions, with space for explanations or feedback if necessary. These should be filled in with the current state of the project, and any issues or deviations should be highlighted in order for the FNR to figure out how best to assist (if possible and/or necessary). There is no financial reporting at this time, and no funding will be sent for the project at this reporting stage. In addition, the PhD monitoring table and project team information should be filled with the most up-to-date information, following the guidance in the appropriate section of these guidelines.

What happens when it's submitted?

After the checklist is submitted, the FNR will go over the template and validate it within 2-3 months after submission, unless any issues need to be clarified, in which case a Programme Manager or Programme Support Manager from the FNR will contact the project's Principal Investigator to assist in making sure the project gets on track as soon as possible.

The Project Mid-term Report

What is the goal?

The mid-term report is a more detailed status update on the implementation of the project, ensuring everything is on track and giving space to the project team to discuss how the project is evolving. As projects evolve based on many different changes in the local, national, and international landscape, the mid-term report allows the project team to detail and reflect upon these changes, as well as how the team is handling them and ensuring that the project maximizes its potential.

Guidance for filling it out

There is a financial section in the mid-term report, where the project team or research facilitator can input the most up-to-date budget details, as well as space for a free-text justification of what has already been spent. If a budget shift is necessary for this project, it can be uploaded to the report.
The project checklist should be updated based on the current situation, and the mid-term report questions should be filled in on the online form. The project team should detail the evolution of the project and how they have handled changes (e.g. new insights from recent literature, interesting experimental data, new collaborations, failed hypotheses, shifts in the domain, etc.). In addition, if there are already outputs that the project team would like to highlight, they can be detailed here as well.
In addition, following the relevant section of the guidelines, the PhD monitoring table and project team information should be filled out with the most up-to-date information.

What happens when it's submitted?

After submission of the mid-term report, the FNR will review and validate it within 3 months of submission unless issues need to be clarified or there are further questions about the report, in which case a Programme Manager or Programme Support Manager will contact the project Principal Investigator.
The FNR will provide feedback to the project team on the mid-term report, which will be attached as an annex to the formal letter. This feedback will be concise and focused on the project implementation as written in the report, either giving a general green light or mentioning things that the FNR staff wants to highlight as opportunities or threats for the project.

The Project Final Report

What is the goal?

The final report is a reflection on the output, outcomes, and potential impact of the project. After the project is over, it is important to reflect upon how it has changed since its initial submission, understand what has come out of the project that can benefit science and society, and think about the next steps for the project team and the research or outreach field. In addition, it is important to recognize a broader range of outputs and outcomes from FNR-funded research projects, in order to highlight contributions to knowledge, individuals and groups, society, as well as the scientific landscape.

Guidance for filling it out

There is a financial section in the final report, where the project team or research facilitator can input the most up-to-date budget details, as well as space for a free-text justification of what has already been spent.

The PhD monitoring table and project team information should be filled out with the most up-to-date information.

As all FNR-funded scientific publications are required to acknowledge the project, published outputs will be able to be collected automatically. When the final reporting stage is opened, the FNR will send the list of collected outputs to the Project PI to ensure that it is correct. The project team should inform the FNR of any changes/modifications, to ensure that project output data is correct and up to date.

Any published or available outputs that are not found in the above manner should be listed in the appropriate section, with links to access them. Such outputs can include articles for lay audiences, policy briefs, project websites, uploaded videos, or anything else which has contributed to science and society. These outputs and their importance can be discussed in the free text sections of the final report.

There are two free text sections of the final report: a lay section and a scientific section, both of which are required to be completed, with all questions in the guidance addressed. The questions are the following:

Scientific Section:

- Scientific summary of the project in final form
- Please outline and provide some details regarding the project's outputs and/or outcomes. These should be related to generating new ideas, hypotheses, or knowledge; Developing people and teams; Contributing to the wider research community; Contributing to the broader society.
- How will you, your team, and the greater research and innovation community build upon the results of this project? What are the next steps for the group in this research area?

Lay Section:

- What was the original idea and why is this research needed? (Guide: Describe the context of the research project like a pitch to a non-scientist)
- What main challenges stood in the way?
- How have you advanced the knowledge in your field?
- What potential impact could this new knowledge have on science, economy and society? (Guide: Imagine you are explaining why your project was necessary to a stranger on the street: How does it advance treatment/understanding; improve efficiency, ease of use etc., short and/or long-term)

The scientific section should include a summary of the project in its final form, after all of the evolutions that took place in the project. In addition, following the relevant sections of the guidelines, the main outputs and outcomes of the project should be discussed. Finally, the next steps for the project and the team should be outlined, specifically around how the overall research or outreach field is moving forward and how the project team will contribute to it.

The lay section should be a reflection of the research project in a way that is accessible and understandable for the greater public. By writing this section, the project team will provide a resource for the further communication and dissemination of both the importance of the research area as well as how the project has contributed to advancing the field and benefiting society.

For assistance in writing the lay section, consider having the text revised by a friend or family member not implicated in research, and please see the following online trainings and resources for further help:

- https://senseaboutscience.org/activities/public-engagement-guide/
- https://wwwfr.uni.lu/formations/fstm/doctoral_education_in_science_communication_descom/scicom_ressources
- https://downloads.hindawi.com/scicomm-guide.pdf

Finally, the project team is encouraged to give feedback to the FNR on processes and/or the handling of this project. Feedback will be gathered and read by the FNR, contributing to the continuous improvement of FNR processes. This section is optional and has no impact on any aspects of the project or future evaluations of other projects by the project team or institutions.

What happens when it's submitted?

After submission of the final report, the FNR will have it evaluated by a researcher or science outreach expert that is acquainted with both the research domain of the project as well as the FNR (e.g. Past or current panel member, Scientific Advisory Board member, etc.). This evaluation will consist of an overall assessment of the final report and the project, specific feedback and recommendations to the project team for further work in the domain and follow-up of the project, as well as highlighting any important actual or potential contributions of the work.
This feedback will be returned to the project team within 3 months to provide guidance and support for their future activities. In addition, if the evaluator consents to make the feedback text public, it can be used by the project team and the FNR in further communication and dissemination of the project's activities. In case the FNR sees the need for further issues to be clarified or if there are further questions about the report, an FNR Programme Manager or Programme Support Manager will contact the project Principal Investigator.

Committee Evaluation

In several programmes, a committee evaluation is part of the reporting process, in the form of a Steering Committee, Scientific Advisory Board, or similar. The shape and purpose of the committee evaluation can vary depending on the programme but is generally composed of experts who are able to provide advice and feedback where needed to help deal with issues in a project or give ideas to increase the quality and potential impact of the research on science and society. They are an important part of FNR reporting as well, providing international benchmarking to the projects that we fund.
Programmes with committee evaluations are required to use different reporting templates for preparing these meetings (instead of the mid-term report described here). These templates can be found on the corresponding funding programme's website on the FNR page. For the final report, the project team is required to fill out the both the specific committee meeting template as well as the final report template described here. Please see the section below for further guidance around reporting in these funding schemes.

Contact and specific guidance for individual programmes

Further guidance specific to individual schemes can be found below. If there are questions on FNR project reporting, extensions, or any other aspects of the process, please contact the responsible team members for the applicable funding scheme.

AFR

For AFR, reports are not an expression of single views, but results from a joint effort by the beneficiary and the supervisor(s), scientific contact(s) or scientific advisor(s).
It is the responsibility of the beneficiary to coordinate the process and ensure that the requested documents and updated data in the online system are submitted on time.
Reports should constructively address any problem or modification to the initial proposal arising in the course of a grant and suggest solutions. If problems arise in the course of a project, they should be addressed to the FNR directly by the beneficiary or the supervisor(s)/scientific contact(s) independently of the reporting deadlines. In particular, major modifications or major deviations from the project plan (including changes in the supervision, host institution or percentage of time spent in Luxembourg) require prior approval by the FNR.
The following supporting documents are also required during the reporting process, and will be asked for in the online form:

- Updated Training Plan
- current PhD Registration certificate
- Additional documents for beneficiaries not employed at one of the Luxembourgish research centres or at the University of Luxembourg:
  - Financial statement for employment costs (template provided)
  - Financial statement for training activities (template provided)
  - For stipends only: Insurance certificate (if costs are rewarded)

NCER

The project checklist will be due at the end of the first year of the project, and the mid-term report is replaced by steering committee progress reports. Progress reports are due every 6 months in phase 1, and annually in phase 2. Templates for the NCER progress reports can be found on the NCER website[2].

PEARL

The project checklist will be due at the end of the first year of the project, and annual SAB reports will replace the mid-term report found in this process. Templates for the PEARL annual report can be found on the PEARL website[3].

PRIDE/IPBG

As the recruitment phase under PRIDE/IPBG is fixed to 2.5 years, the "Project Reporting Checklist" will be due 2 years following the start of the project (with submission deadlines either 31 March or 30 September). The Project mid-term report will be due 3.5 years after the project start with a submission deadline based upon the project start date. The final report will be due 6.5 years after with submission deadlines based upon contract end date. From the PRIDE call 2021 onwards, the mid-term report will be complemented by a presentation of the project's progress within two months after the reporting deadline.

PSP Classic and PSP Flagship

The aim of the funding programmes "Promoting Science to the Public" is to bring science closer to society. As research projects are not eligible under these programmes (with the exceptions of citizen

[2] https://www.fnr.lu/funding-instruments/ncer/
[3] https://www.fnr.lu/funding-instruments/pearl/

science projects), the main outcomes in the reporting will not be measured in the scientific contribution to a specific research field but the potential of the outreach activity to engage society and allow the target audience to come into contact with science and research interactively. While the structure of the reporting is aligned to what is presented in this document, the wording around the content and different points to be addressed in the new reporting forms have been adapted specifically for PSP to allow for an adequate explanation of the outreach project by the applicant. Measuring the satisfaction of the participating audience remains highly relevant for PSP projects. In case of additional questions on the new reporting guidelines, please do not hesitate to contact the programme coordinator of PSP.

RESCOM

As the RESCOM scheme funds events, there are additional elements required for the final report: the signed RESCOM Final Financial Report, copies of invoices, the final programme of the event, a digital copy of the abstract book (if available and initially requested) or a digital copy of the conference proceedings (if available and initially requested) as well as any material which could illustrate the success of the event. For more information or in case of additional questions, please read the RESCOM guidelines or get in contact with RESCOM programme support manager.