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Explanatory Document on Baekeland mandates

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Introduction

This handbook describes what is meant by a **Baekeland mandate** and how companies and researchers can benefit from the available funding.

This handbook contains general information about the funding programme. It should be read together with the additional information available on the website (www.vlaio.be), including the application form, the description of the selection criteria, the description of the mutual cooperation agreement, etc. Regular consultation of the website is highly recommended.

Additional questions can also be sent to: Baekeland-IM@vlaio.be.

This text is a translation from an original in Dutch. In case of dispute, the Dutch-language version shall have sole legal validity.

Positioning

The purpose of Baekeland mandates is to offer researchers the opportunity to make a PhD in close collaboration with the business/industrial sector.

Baekeland mandates provide support for individual mandates, including cofinancing of operating costs associated with the implementation of the project.

A basic principle of the Baekeland mandate is that on the one hand, a Flemish company is involved in the strategic orientation of the project and cofinances it, and on the other hand, a Flemish university is responsible for the supervision of the PhD and the conferral/assignment of the doctoral degree according to the accepted quality norms/standards. Other knowledge centers (strategic research centres, research institutes, colleges, etc.) can also act as host institutes for a doctoral candidate in so far that they cooperate with a scientific supervisor affiliated with a university.

The mandate holder can be an employee of a knowledge centre or a company. Work activities can take place in the knowledge centre or in a company.

The support provided is granted as a project-based support to a company that enters into a cooperation agreement with the knowledge centre. The company serves as VLAIO's primary applicant.

Funding programme features

Scope of project

The purpose of Baekeland mandates is to support research that –in case of success– has clear economical objectives and offers added value to the company involved in the project. However, the research is oriented to acquiring a PhD and meets the accepted criteria for doctoral research. In order to be eligible for support, a project proposal for a Baekeland mandate must offer at the very least a scientific challenge and a definition of a problem that will give a researcher the opportunity to become intellectually competent and to develop into a fully-fledged researcher.

Applicants and partners

Baekeland mandates are projects that are assigned to a 'consortium' of a Flemish company and a Flemish university. Other types of knowledge centres (or research institutes, strategic research centres, colleges, etc.) could also act as host institutes in so far that they cooperate with a scientific supervisor affiliated with a university.

There are at least five parties involved: (1) VLAIO, which grants the mandate, (2) the company that acts as the main applicant, is co-responsible for the financing and appoints an industrial mentor, (3) the mandate holder, (4) the knowledge centre with which the mandate holder is associated (a university, research centre, strategic research centre, college, etc.) and (5) the supervisor responsible for the doctoral supervision and who is affiliated with a university. All five parties have to be listed when submitting a project application.

The company acts as the main applicant vis-à-vis VLAIO and as a party to the funding agreement. Since one or more research partners are involved, a mutual cooperation agreement is required, signed by the scientific supervisor as well.

The support provided is project-based, paid in yearly instalments to the main applicant (the company). The mandate holder can be an employee of the company or an employee of a knowledge centre (university or research centre).

VLAIO therefore does not act as an employer and is not responsible for the direct payment of a salary to the mandate holder. The employer, which can be either a knowledge centre or a company, is responsible for the contractual aspects related to the employment, salary and reimbursements of the mandate holder.

The candidate (for the mandate) who wishes to apply for a Baekeland mandate must first outline the cooperation framework that will be set up between the company and the university doctoral supervisor. The application must be submitted by the company.

Companies eligible for funding

All companies with legal entity, ranging from SMEs ([definition in Dutch](#)) to Flemish branches of a multinational enterprises, with an operational office in Flanders are eligible for support. Enterprises that plan to set up an operational office in Flanders are also eligible to receive funding, whereby the actual granting of support remains dependent on the effective establishment of the enterprise in Flanders.

An enterprise is an entity that carries out an economic activity and has legal entity. In case of an enterprise still in the process of being founded, a start-up or a spin-off in the incubation phase, support shall only be granted on the condition that the applicant can submit proof of incorporation (and therefore of the legal entity of the company), proof of funds, and proof that the company will fulfill all obligations within the context of the project no later than four months after the granting of the support.

Furthermore, the enterprise must be able to put the results of the project into practice in Flanders to a sufficient extent and thus create added value in the form of economic and/or societal impact (and the expansion of a knowledge network). However, this does not mean that companies are barred from taking project results abroad: exporting innovative products is not a problem.

According to European regulations, enterprises must not be undertaking in difficulties at the time the support is granted (i.e. enterprises that are in distress at the time of application may still be eligible). For a definition of 'undertaking in difficulties' and [more information about how VLAIO evaluates an Enterprise 'Undertaking in Difficulties' can be found on this webpage.](#)

Enterprises in the non-profit sector:

Private and public organizations from the non-profit sector are eligible to receive support for their research and development activities as part of the innovation aid regulation under the same conditions as all other organizations.

In general, the following guidelines apply:

- Legal entity is required and the organization must demonstrate that it is involved in economic activity (= selling services in a free market) through a Flemish operation office in a way that can be expected to be sustainable.
- Non-profit organizations, like all other enterprises applying for business innovation support, must be able to demonstrate that they have sufficient private funds to finance their share of the project.
- If an organization is eligible to receive funding as an "enterprise", it can claim the SME allowance regardless of its legal form. As with enterprises with shareholders, companies without shareholders can be scrutinized to determine whether they are an independent company or part of a group of affiliated companies. This includes examining the voting rights of members (and the dependence of those members on other companies), the extent to which one or a few companies have control over

that company, and the extent to which the company is under central management. Affiliated companies are consolidated in the same manner as is customary for companies with a shareholder structure.

Public companies with legal entity:

Support may be granted to public companies only for projects in which they effectively collaborate with private companies, with the public company bearing no more than 70% of the eligible costs in the project receiving support. In addition to the condition mentioned above, public companies must meet all the same requirements as private companies, and compliance with the requirements will be scrutinized closely. The most important of these requirements are:

- Having sufficient co-financing (with own/private funds) for the project;
- Eligible valorisation scores;
- Prospects for valorisation do not touch upon any publicly funded projects run by the organization.

Cooperation between different companies

The main applicant must always be a Flemish company as described above. This main applicant can either submit the application on its own or do so in collaboration with one or more other companies, in which case they jointly bear the risk and costs of the project (business partners). All business partners act as co-contractors, with one serving as the main applicant.

Companies can collaborate to support a demand-driven doctoral project if they can together provide the required financial capacity and professional environment. They must then sign a binding collaboration agreement in which they commit to making sufficient time and resources available for the doctoral project. The project must then be anchored at one of the participating companies, which must have at least one employee with the competence to act as an industrial mentor.

Companies outside Flanders with their own valorization rationale can also be involved as partners. However, they are not eligible for Flemish support.

If multiple companies collaborate on a project and at least one of them is a SME, an increased support can be granted (for further explanation, see "Duration and eligible activities").

Each business partner has its own valorization rationale. The potential added economic value for the business partners as a result of the research results is evaluated. Baekeland mandates do not aim for collective research in which the results are widely shared for a large group of companies.

The clear direction and guidance of the mandate holder deserve special attention in applications involving multiple companies and possibly also multiple scientific co-promoters.

Research organisations

Only business partners are eligible to receive support in the innovation aid programs specified here. Organizations that make use of programs that support research organizations in carrying out non-economic activities (independent research and/or dissemination research results) can therefore be funded through the business partner(s) but have no direct access to innovation support themselves. Research organizations include knowledge institutions such as universities and universities of applied sciences, as well as strategic research centres and all other organizations eligible for funding for research organizations involved in non-economic activities.

Additional requirements for principal/co-applicants:

- Enterprises can not hold a legal monopoly

Enterprises that legally hold an absolute monopoly within Flanders or within a substantial part thereof shall not be eligible for support, unless the project for which they apply for support falls outside the scope of this monopoly. This point may be especially relevant for public organizations or organizations providing one or more services of general interest.

A monopoly exists when there is no competition in the given market and/or there are no substitutes or alternatives for the products and/or services offered by the company in question.

- Enterprises can not hold a dominant position

An enterprise is considered to hold a dominant position if it is able to prevent effective competition and if it is thereby largely able to operate independently of competitors, customers or suppliers. An enterprise also holds a dominant position if it has a market share of more than 50% in the project's valorization market.

In such a case, it will be assessed whether this dominant position within the project's valorization market, and in particular within Flanders or a substantial part thereof, may be sufficiently anti-competitive to constitute a sufficient reason for refusing support, by analogy with a legal monopoly.

Industrial mentor

The department of the company with which the doctoral student is affiliated, must have the qualifications for supporting the doctoral research until its completion. The company must have at least one employee who has the competence to act as an industrial mentor for the doctoral student. In addition, the environment must be a professional one that will properly support the doctoral project.

Mandate holder

The mandate holder can be an employee of the company or of the university. The regulation is open to all candidates who are admitted into a doctoral programme by a Flemish university. VLAIO does not impose any additional limits. Therefore, the regulation is open to all nationalities and to all people holding diplomas that the university accepts for subscribing to a doctoral programme. There are no requirements in terms of degrees. Nevertheless, candidates who already have a PhD-diploma cannot be accepted.

The mandate holder carries out the research project in cooperation with the company and the lab of a knowledge centre. The mandate holder is registered for doctoral studies in the host university. He/she divides his/her time between the knowledge centre and the company, as stipulated also in the cooperation agreement.

Duration and activities eligible for funding

In principle, a mandate is for four years. Halfway through the project, an interim evaluation will be conducted to monitor the progress of the project and to check whether the mandate is being allocated properly according to the objectives.

A Baekeland mandate includes the financing of salary costs, overhead and working costs related to one specific employee. It is possible to obtain a Baekeland mandate for part-time staffing (minimum is 50% staffing) as long as the prospects for achieving a doctorate remain, which is part of the detailed evaluation of the application.

In the case of part-time staffing, the duration of the project will be extended so that the total support corresponds to 4 full-time person-years. If the project lasts more than four years, the date of the interim evaluation is adjusted accordingly.

The preparation of a budget follows the cost model of VLAIO. More information about acceptable costs and the preparation of the budget is provided in the explanatory document on the website.

The accepted budget serves as the basis for calculating a subsidy. The base support percentage is 50% and can be increased (cumulatively):

- a small enterprise (SE) can receive an additional 20% of support and a medium-sized enterprise (ME) can receive an additional 10% of support
- the project can receive an additional 10% of support if there is actual cooperation between multiple independent supported companies, where none of the companies take on more than 70% of the costs of the collaboration project for themselves and at least one partner is an SME.

VLAIO pays the subsidy to the company serving as the main applicant, which is responsible for full reimbursement of the partners.

Cumulation with other state aid within the same project

When calculating the total grant amount, VLAIO will take other public aid (eg. other grants, etc.) received for the same costs into account, i.e. costs can only be eligible for one type of funding. Subsidy rates can in no case exceed the rules of the General Block Exemption Regulation.

From January 1st 2022 on, personnel from beneficiaries which make use of partial exemption from withholding tax for Young Innovative Company (YIC)¹ cannot be included in the budget of an application for a Baekeland mandate. ([For alternatives of partial exemption from withholding taxes see vlaio-website](#)).

Processing of the application

Submitting an application

Applications may -principally- be submitted any day of the year. However, decisions take place two times per year. Before each decision date, VLAIO defines the last date for submitting an application on the website.

Eligibility

Within 14 working days after the deadline for submission, a decision on eligibility of the application is taken.

¹ A Young Innovative Company is a company that meets the following conditions:

- the company is a small enterprise (SE);
- the company was established less than 10 years ago;
- the company was not established in the context of a concentration, restructuring or expansion of a former activity or the acquisition of such activities;
- the company's R&D expenditure represents at least 15% of its total costs in the previous tax year.

Eligibility is based on formal criteria.

- The company must have a registered office in Flanders. Entities that do not have their seat in Flanders, but do envision sufficient valorisation in Flanders in the future, can submit an application, conditional to an exceptional permission from VLAIO.
- At the moment of the submission, the company is no “undertaking in difficulty” (see [Enterprise Undertaking in Difficulties \(UID\)](#))
- Applicants being a large enterprise or having a final energy consumption of more than 0,1 PJ in the Flemish establishment have added an elucidation of the climate plan to the project application based on [the VLAIO template](#).
- The various partners, the company, the knowledge centre (university, research centre, college, etc.), the mandate holder and the scientific supervisor, are known at the time of the application. The company and the knowledge centre agree on implementing the activities.
- An industrial mentor is appointed by the company for supervising the mandate holder. If the research is carried out in a research institute, which does not (confer) assign doctorates itself, but for this purpose cooperates with a scientific supervisor affiliated with a university, then a supervisor is also required in the knowledge centre.
- The university with which the supervisor is affiliated has to accept the candidate to do doctoral research. The university is required to submit a declaration that the candidate meets all the conditions for admission into a doctoral research programme. Ideally, this declaration should be submitted together with the application. If this declaration is not available on the date of submission, a provisional admittance can be given (stating the condition on which the candidate is accepted to the PhD-program) and the evaluation can get started.
- The intentions with regard to intellectual property and use of the results are known. A signed declaration of intent (term sheet/“afsprakennota”) or a cooperation agreement is required. In the absence of such a signed term sheet or cooperation agreement at the time of the project submission, VLAIO can declare provisional admittance and the evaluation can proceed. However, if VLAIO does not possess a term sheet or cooperation agreement at the deadline for submission of the term sheet as stipulated on the website, the project proposal is declared ineligible and the provisional handling is stopped.

There is no limit on the number of mandates that a company can apply for. An individual researcher can only be presented twice as a candidate mandate holder within an application for a Baekeland mandate.

During the eligibility analysis, VLAIO has the right to request additional information about official aspects, such as the status of the company with regard to social security (RSZ) contributions, the financial means of the company to finance the mandate, etc.

In case of a positive evaluation, the company enters an agreement for financing its own contribution for the entire mandate. Hence, VLAIO also conducts a business and financial analysis. It checks whether the company has sufficient financial resources at their disposal, are up to date with all government and permit requirements, and properly implemented any earlier funded projects. Especially for companies which are not known to VLAIO, or if the situation of the company is not clear, VLAIO shall request additional information before deciding the eligibility. VLAIO can declare an application ineligible if a company cannot substantiate elements of financial means and/or the company is not in compliance with the regulations. The handling of a Baekeland application only starts after the required declarations are issued.

Evaluation schedule

VLAIO will decide within 90 working days, from the date the application is declared eligible, whether to support the project. In order to handle the applications in groups, each year there are two deadlines for submission. However, it is the eligibility that determines the timing of the decision. The dates are as follows (indicative):

Call	Deadline for submission	Eligibility	Panels	Decision
1st Call	End of March	April	May/June	Mid July
2nd Call	Beginning of September	September	October/November	End of December

For each call, the exact dates for submitting the proposals will be published on the website (www.vlaio.be).

Starting date

Implementation of a mandate always begins on the first day of the month. Implementation must start within six months following the decision of the Decision committee 'Fonds voor Innoveren en Ondernemen'.

It is possible to start the implementation of a mandate even before the decision. The starting date is at the earliest on the first day of the month following the submission deadline, as long as the application can be declared eligible (or provisionally eligible in case the term sheet and/or the admission into the doctoral research programme is submitted later) within a normal period of 14 working days. Important to note is that for the final payment, the period prior to the decision can only be financially supported if the implementation was effectively started and the costs for this period can be demonstrated. If the parties chose for a starting date before the decision, then this occurs at the risk of the company. Important to note is that the mandate can only be started if all the eligibility requirements and all the conditions for carrying out doctoral research are met. In any case a Baekeland mandate cannot be started as long as the candidate has not been admitted by a university for doing the doctoral research.

Evaluation procedure

The final decision is based on a well-founded advice by external experts. This is based on the oral defence by the candidate mandate holder in which he/she explains the project and answers questions posed by the experts. The scientific supervisor and/or the company representatives do not have to provide any explanations.

By making decisions on groups of applications, the jury has the possibility to handle several project applications at the same time. A specialist is assigned to each file and he/she has a leading role in the interactive discussion. The evaluation and granting of an assessment is based on a consensus among the jury members. Experts who are affiliated with the same department as the candidate mandate holder or are affiliated with the company applying for the mandate are regarded as incompatible and cannot participate in the evaluation of an individual file. The experts must sign a confidentiality agreement, which is identical to the confidentiality agreement used for evaluation of industrial R&D projects.

VLAIO designates external experts for each call. There are no permanent committees. The names of the external experts are not announced in advance. At the oral defence of his/her project, the mandate candidate is informed about the names of the experts.

In order to maintain a proper balance during the evaluation between the project's application possibilities and its doctorate-level qualities, the targeted composition of the evaluation team is 50% experts from the business sector or from other potential users of the research results and 50% from the academic world and public research organisations.

To reduce any possible conflict of interest among industrial competitors, it is possible to submit a short list of industrial experts to be avoided. This must be based on the name or at least on the affiliation. Objection cannot be submitted based on content elements. Therefore, it is not possible to object to all experts that are for instance active in diagnosis. However, it is possible to object to academic experts if they are affiliated with a competitive company. Submitting an objection to an academic expert is only possible at the department level, not at the level of the institute or university.

When designating the experts, VLAIO will take into account –as much as possible– any requests for objections. If an unreasonable number of objections are made about names/entities (more than five), VLAIO will not consider the request. When objecting to academic experts, the important element is the connection to the competing company. If the request is based purely on personal preference or rejection, VLAIO will not necessarily take this into account.

Application Document

The evaluation is based on a project application according to a form provided for that purpose.

The basic elements are:

- Innovation goal: a concise summary with emphasis on the objectives and the intended results; fit of the research within the innovation strategy of the company;
- Project description: positioning, rationale + setting up objectives, approach + work programme;
- Intended applications and valorisation;
- Guidance: description of how a project will fit with the expertise provided by the academic supervisor and the industrial mentor;
- Budget;
- CV of the candidate mandate holder;
- Declaration of intent by the knowledge centre and company regarding the availability of support and infrastructure, and agreements about the future use of the results, including agreements on intellectual property (term sheet or cooperation agreement);
- Official information (*will be specified in the application form*).

The innovation goal constitutes a formal starting point for the funding agreement. This has to be described as specific as possible. Changes within the boundaries of the innovation goal do not require any adjustment of the agreement.

Applications can be submitted in Dutch or English. The defence is in the language of the application.

Decision

Evaluation Criteria

Each application is assessed on two evaluation aspects: the scientific quality and the valorisation dimension. For each aspect the jury assesses the quality of the candidate and the quality of the project proposal. Therefore, the evaluation is based on four sets of criteria.

The evaluation criteria and the evaluation method are explained further in the document 'Scoregrid Baekeland Mandates' on the website.

Each criterion receives an assessment that varies from critical (=unacceptable) to weak, reasonable, good and excellent. Based on the assessments for all the criteria, a global assessment is made for each project proposal with regard to the scientific aspect and the valorisation dimension.

Based on these assessments, the granted (financial) support is decided.

The Decision committee 'Fonds voor Innoveren en Ondernemen' makes a decision about providing or not providing support based on the detailed assessments. If the available budget is insufficient for providing support to all the projects, then the committee makes selective decisions and grants the support to the highest ranked proposals within the available budget.

Request for reconsideration

In case of a negative decision, the applicant (company) can apply for a reconsideration of the decision. On the VLAIO website, you can find the Flemish Government's decision for research projects to carry out doctoral research or postdoctoral research in collaboration with research organizations dated May 12, 2017 (het besluit van de Vlaamse Regering voor onderzoeksprojecten voor de uitvoering van doctoraatsonderzoek of postdoctoraal onderzoek in samenwerking met onderzoeksorganisaties van 12 mei 2017). The conditions to request a reconsideration are described in Chapter 6. This request for review must be submitted within 60 working days of the decision and must be based on clear and verifiable elements.

If the request for reconsideration requests the composition of a new panel of experts, an assessment must be made as to whether this request is well-founded. If this question is accepted, the candidate mandate holder will be invited to an expert panel that will take place within the framework of the next call and will be as close as possible in content to the theme of the project application.

However, a restriction is imposed that the same candidate mandatory can defend the application up to a maximum of 2 times at an oral expert meeting. Specifically, once a revision with a defense before a newly constituted expert panel has been processed, a resubmission is no longer possible (with the same candidate mandate holder) or in the case of a resubmission, a revision with defense before a newly constituted expert panel is no longer possible.

Complaints

A written, oral or digital complaint can be submitted at any time in case of dissatisfaction about the way VLAIO handled the application. Complaints will be dealt with within 45 days following receipt.

Rights and Obligations

Intellectual Property Rights

In this program, the research organization acts as a research partner. After all, this is a substantive collaboration between company and research organization and project results are generated from the research which are susceptible to intellectual property rights. In this case, the company reimburses the service at real cost and agrees to participate in the ownership of the project results.

This participation can e.g. take the following forms:

- all property rights with the company with fair compensation to the research organization upon exploitation of the project results;
- division of ownership rights whereby the company and the research organization each have ownership rights to a different group of partial results with allocation of domains for (autonomous) exploitation. In case of impossibility of division of the project results, this assignment of domains for (autonomous) exploitation can also be done within a regime of shared property rights;
- property rights on the project results with the research institution with at least a right of use on the project results needed by the company;
- arrangement of undivided common property rights to the project results at the company and the research organization.

The above options are only examples. Various combinations of the proposed situations and other options where ownership rights to the project results from activities of the research organization are shared are acceptable as long as they do not conflict with the objectives of innovation support and as long as a participation in the project results coming from the research of the research organization is arranged. It is essential that the company has at least the necessary freedom to realize the planned valorization.

The partners have to make the basic agreements on this known when submitting the project application to VLAIO. However, it is primarily up to the research organization to ensure the correct application of the market price for a service provided by this research organization.

A general standard arrangement applies to the arrangements for IP and use of the results. For each individual application, other provisions can be mutually agreed upon.

The basic models for the IP arrangement are included in the standard Baekeland cooperation agreement drawn up by the universities and companies. This standard cooperation agreement, included in an explanatory document, is not a strict template but has an informative function to explain the different possible models of IP arrangements.

The key elements of the IP agreements must be included in a mutually signed memorandum of understanding when an application is submitted. These elements may play a role in the evaluation if applicable and thus should be known prior to the jury interview. This memorandum is part of the eligibility. In the absence of a signed memorandum of understanding (or cooperation agreement) at the time of project submission, VLAIO may declare an application conditionally eligible and start the evaluation already. However, if VLAIO is not in possession of the signed memorandum of understanding (or cooperation agreement) by the deadline for submission of this memorandum of understanding (deadline mentioned in the call document), the project will be declared ineligible and the provisionally started evaluation will be stopped.

The formal confirmation of the agreements is done in a cooperation agreement (see below). This must be signed before an aid agreement is concluded after a positive decision.

It is obviously essential that the detailed elements in the final cooperation agreement remain within the broad outlines of the agreements in the memorandum of understanding.

Support Agreement

In the case of a positive decision, a support agreement is concluded between the 'Fonds voor Innoveren en Ondernemen' and the primary applicant (company).

The support agreement is a commitment of effort, which binds the partners to make every effort to achieve the described innovation goal.

The support agreement also includes a commitment for sufficient valorisation in Flanders in the case of successful results.

The support agreement contains commitment by the applicant (the company) to provide its own adequate financial means in order to guarantee the continuity of the project. The modalities for mutual contributions are regulated in the cooperation agreement (see below).

If relevant, VLAIO will include specific conditions in the support agreement, such as possession of required permits, etc. In case of doubt about the financial means of the applicant (the company) during the project period, financial conditions could also be set down in order to guarantee the contribution of the particular company during the implementation.

Cooperation Agreement

A cooperation agreement is concluded between the partners and it regulates at the very least:

- Agreements about mutual payments
- Designation of contact persons
- Procedure in case of disputes
- Mutual agreements regarding IP and use of results

The cooperation agreement is signed at the very least by the authorised representatives of:

- The company
- The knowledge centre

The support agreement is concluded by VLAIO only **after** receiving the cooperation agreement. A signed cooperation agreement must be received no later than four months following the decision. If after four months a cooperation agreement has not been received, the positive decision is cancelled.

The cooperation agreement contains the commitment of the knowledge centre and a supervisor –who meets the legal requirements for supervising the doctorate in a continuous manner– to perform the doctoral supervision. The cooperation agreement also contains a commitment by the company to finance the costs on which the subsidy is calculated.

If in the course of the project, a supervisor can no longer fulfil his/her task –for whatever reason– it is possible to re-assign the supervision task to another supervisor. The knowledge centre and the company concerned

are required to adjust the cooperation agreement and to submit this for approval to VLAIO. The support agreement concluded between the 'Fonds voor Innoveren en Ondernemen' and the primary applicant does not change as a result of this. If the candidate ceases his/her activities, then the agreement, which is granted personally, is automatically cancelled.

Release of funding

The funding is a project-based subsidy and is paid in yearly instalments to the primary applicant.

The first instalment is paid at the start of the project.

The primary applicant is responsible for the timely payment of any partners in instalments. The university is a contractual research partner. The primary applicant is responsible for paying all research partner costs that are part of the eligible costs for which the applicant receive the subsidy.

Payment by VLAIO is conditional on the proper implementation of the project and on compliance with the reporting and notification requirements.

At the end of the project, a final verification of the real costs is made. Based on the accepted costs and the applied support percentages, the total support is determined and final instalment is paid, whereas the instalment already paid are taken into account.

Reporting

The innovation goal is the starting point of the funding agreement. Adjustments/changes within the scope of the innovation goal are possible without the need to adjust the agreement.

Standard project reporting consists of short follow-up reports for each payment, a mid-term report and a final report when the project is completed. The final report has to include:

- A summary of the scientific results (Academic progress)
- Implementation of the innovation goal, including the strategic application
- Valorisation report
- Financial report

The reporting templates can be found on the website.

Interim Evaluation

Halfway the project, an interim evaluation is made to evaluate the progress of the project and to monitor whether the mandate is being allocated properly according to the agreed upon objectives.

The interim evaluation is based on a report about the results and the prospects for future applications. The mandate holder is always given the opportunity to have an interview with the external experts, a setting in which various elements can be explained. If deemed relevant, the scientific supervisor and the industrial mentor can also be invited for a discussion.

If during the course of the mandate, the partners wish to significantly change the innovation goal, this will also have to be submitted to the jury of external experts during the interim evaluation. In the case of a positive advice, the mandate can progress further with the adjusted innovation goal. With this decision, the

jury shall take into account the quality of the proposed change, but also the feasibility of the adjusted innovation goal within the remaining period, including the possibility of completing the doctorate.

Publication Right

The purpose of a Baekeland mandate is achieving a PhD. Publishing is very important for a doctoral candidate. Therefore, as part of the Baekeland mandate, the mandate holder also has the right to publish. Within the agreements about intellectual property, publication might be postponed due to reasons of patent applications. The possibility of the mandate holder to publish cannot be denied without valid/sound reasons.

Reconsideration of the Support

A Baekeland mandate is granted as support for R&D projects in the business sector under the regime of 'industrial research'. As common in industrial R&D projects, the status of the state of affairs is established at the end of the project, and also 2 and 5 years after the end.

This reporting has a double purpose:

- Monitoring the prospects of applications in the future
- Evaluation of the achieved (or not achieved) doctorate

If from the reports it emerges that the implementation of the project is not in compliance with the modalities of awarding support and the innovation goal, VLAIO might reconsider the support. If it indeed emerges that the implementation cannot be considered as research on a doctorate-level and the project implementation complies more with a classical development project, the support will at least be reviewed as support for development projects within the commonly accepted support framework (support is 25% instead of 50%). This is actually an obvious review: the European Commission would consider awarding the support of 50% under the regime of industrial research for a project in experimental development an infringement in the market. The special thing about the Baekeland mandates is that this is probed explicitly during a fixed monitoring period in order to preclude improper use as much as possible.

In practice, the *post factum* control of the research type remains limited to situations in which no doctorate is obtained at the moment of monitoring. When obtaining the doctorate, aside for monitoring of possible applications, there is no further analysis after the closure of the project period.

In the case of non-compliance with the contractual agreements, during the project or with monitoring after the project, support can be reconsidered with the possibility of re-claiming the financial support that was already paid in the case of proven shortcomings.

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