LETTER of RECOMMENDATION

Dear Colleague,

The researcher contacting you has applied for a Postdoctoral fellowship from the IRIS Postdoctoral COFUND programme at ULB and VUB in Brussels, Belgium. The **Interdisciplinary Research In Societal challenges Postdoctoral COFUND (IRIS)** is key to implementing the European Commission’s policy in the Brussels Capital Region (BCR), addressing the Research and Innovation Smart Specialisation Strategy “…to improve resilience and economic prosperity (sustainability, quality of employment and well-being of citizens) and contribute to the social and ecological transitions through innovative responses to societal challenges”, a priority which is shared amongst many European and Global urban centres. IRIS fellows will address **one or more of the six societal challenges identified by the RIS3 for BCR that have wide relevance for urban areas across the globe: 1) Climate & Energy, 2) Resource Optimization, 3) Mobility, 4) Healthy & Sustainable Food, 5) Health & Well-being, and 6) Participative & Inclusive Society.** During the fellowship, IRIS postdocs will have **30 months** to fully carry out their interdisciplinary research projects.  To learn more about the programme visit our website: <https://iris-cofund.eu/>

Letters of recommendation are due by the fellowship application deadline **31st October 2025 at 17.00 CET** but may be submitted at any time after 1st July 2025. The fellow will upload the signed PDF of your letter, please allow time for this process.

**What to Include in Letters of Recommendation**

Letters of recommendation are key components of the application and are weighed heavily. Letters should contain the following information:

* How long the recommender has known applicant
* Relationship to the applicant (e.g. advisor, employer, etc)
* Quantitative ranking of applicant to other researchers in your experience (e.g. top 10%)
* Comment on the applicant’s
  + Analytical skills
  + Ability to form new and creative ideas and research questions
  + Ability to work in an interdisciplinary environment
  + Writing skills
* Administrative information
  + Recommender Information
    - Recommender first and last names
    - Recommender e-mail address
    - Recommender institution/affiliation
  + Fellowship Applicant Information:
    - applicant first and last names
    - Applicant’s email address

Recommenders may provide any additional, related comments that they believe will help reviewers evaluate the merit of the applicant.

Some studies[[1]](#footnote-1) have demonstrated that people who write letters of recommendation unintentionally describe candidates differently according to their gender, we invite you to critically reread the letter with that in mind before submitting it.

Thank you in advance for your help.

The IRIS Postdoctoral COFUND Project Management Team

1. Eberhardt M, Facchini G, & Rueda V (2023) Gender Differences in Reference Letters: Evidence from the Economics Job Market. **The Economic Journal**, 133(655), p. 2676–2708, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ej/uead045>; Czech A, Olarreaga M, & Peila O (2024). Gender gap in faculty promotion**. PloS one**, 19(11), e0313311 <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0313311> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)