GUIDE TO THE RELEVANCE OF RESEARCH PROJECTS SUBMITTED TO THE IRSST'S SCHOLARSHIP/FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

The purpose of this document is to help students prepare their scholarship or fellowship applications for the IRSST graduate studies scholarship and postdoctoral fellowship program, specifically with regard to the relevance of their project. For an application to be passed on to the Review Committee, the proposed research project first has to be deemed relevant by the IRSST's Executive Office upon recommendation by the Scientific Advisory Board. It is therefore essential that in your scholarship/fellowship application form you describe as clearly as possible how and why the proposed research project is relevant.

A research project is deemed relevant if it can potentially contribute to the prevention of industrial accidents and occupational diseases and to the rehabilitation of affected workers, and/or to the production of new occupational health and safety knowledge for Québec workplaces and workers.

The IRSST carries out most of its scientific activities in four research fields that it identified as priorities. The Institute hopes to acquire a critical mass of knowledge for each field in order to generate significant benefits for workplaces. The four research fields and their respective goals are as follows:

1) Chemical and Biological Hazard Prevention

Goals: The work done by researchers in this field helps prevent occupational diseases and their adverse effects on health, and improve and sustain the health and well-being of workers exposed to chemical and biological agents. It does so by developing new knowledge and making optimal use of existing knowledge.

2) Mechanical and Physical Risk Prevention

Goals: The researchers in this field focus specifically on assessing and reducing physical and mechanical risks that could jeopardize worker health and safety, taking into account workers' interaction with the machines around them and their work environment. The machines may be of the fixed or mobile industrial type or hand power tools.

3) Sustainable Prevention and Work Environment

Goals: While the focus is on sustainable prevention of OHS problems, including musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs), this field also helps further understanding of the social, demographic, organizational, and technological factors that have an impact on the occurrence of work-related injuries. To provide clearer guidance for preventive actions taken in workplaces, researchers in this field concentrate their energies on the following priority issues:

- the work activity and environment,
- characteristics of enterprises,
- human and demographic aspects (age, gender, immigrant workers),
- training,
- work schedules, and
- psychosocial factors.

4) Occupational Rehabilitation

Goals: Occupational rehabilitation research helps prevent or reduce the risks of long-term disability in workers who sustain work-related injuries. More specifically, it supports the sustainable and safe return to work of workers with such injuries. To achieve this goal, the researchers in this field examine:

- the various personal, organizational, administrative, and healthcare-system-related factors that affect the return-to-work process, and
- methods of intervention for rehabilitating workers or reintegrating them into the labour force.