

Call for research projects 2026

"Research on Hereditary spastic paraplegia" Biomedical Sciences

Maximum budget: **25 000 €** - Maximum duration: **24 months**

Deadline: **May 4, 2026 - 5pm** (Paris time)

Your profile must be created on the application platform prior to any application (instructions p3).

Context

Due to the specificities of the rare disease field, the French Strümpell-Lorrain Hereditary Spastic Paraplegia Association (ASL-HSP) and the Fondation Maladies Rares (Foundation For Rare Diseases - FFRD) have agreed on a **partnership to support and stimulate research on Hereditary Spastic Paraplegia** (rare disease group: rare neurological diseases; sector(s): ERN RND, branch: BRAIN-TEAM).

ASL-HSP¹ initial aim was to bring together and help people affected by 'Hereditary Spastic Paraplegia', without excluding regions, states, or continents. The Association's mission is to welcome, unite, build solidarity, inform, advise, support, represent, raise awareness, and support research.

FFRD² is a private non-profit organization, founded in 2012³ by five members⁴, with the aim of helping to (i) decipher rare diseases to facilitate diagnosis and accelerate the development of new treatments, (ii) improve the daily lives of people with disease and their loved ones. Its mission is of general interest: to lead, coordinate and support research on rare diseases. It provides free support to patient organizations in their efforts to promote rare diseases research, for example through joint calls for projects such as the one proposed here.

Aim of the call

Hereditary spastic paraplegia (HSP) is a genetically and clinically heterogeneous group of slowly progressive neurological disorders that can be divided into pure and complex forms. The pure form is characterized by pyramidal signs predominantly affecting the lower limbs and with possible association of sphincter disturbances and deep sensory loss. The complex form is characterized by the addition of variable neurological or non-neurological features.

This call aims to support any **innovative research program** (basic, translational or clinical) that advances **development of therapeutical strategies for HSP**.

All disciplines in Biomedical Sciences are eligible.

Particular attention will be given to projects in translational and clinical research, as well as to projects in physiopathology interested in paraparesis due to the most common mutations (in the SPG-4, SPG-

¹<https://www.asl-hsp-france.org>

² <https://fondation-maladiesrares.org/en/>

³ PNMR2 : <http://www.sante.gouv.fr/le-plan-national-maladies-rares-2011-14-une-ambition-renouvelee.html>

⁴ AFM-Telethon, Rare Diseases Alliance, Inserm, Conference of University Hospital Directors, Conference of University Presidents

3A, SPG-7 and SPG-11 genes). Yet, translation projects devoted to the treatment of the spasticity should be considered regardless of the HSP genetic forms.

Eligibility criteria

The project must explicitly formulate a **research question**, addressing issues specifically related to HSP. The project must demonstrate its **originality**, feasibility and **the expertise(s) of the** researchers involved.

The principal investigator of the project ("lead applicant" – P.I.) must be a **researcher**, belonging to an **academic (French or foreign) public research organization**⁵. It is expected that the applicant will be statutory and hold a permanent position. Otherwise, the applicant will have to provide proof of an employment contract with the organization managing the allocated funds. The said employment contract must run for the entire duration of the research project plus 6 months.

There must be a clear match between the main methodology used in the project and the expertise of the principal investigator.

Funding

Thanks to the ASL-HSP association, this call for research projects provides financial support of up to **25 000 €**, for a maximum duration of **24** months.

If it is entirely and exclusively dedicated to the research experiments, the funding support can cover the costs of:

- Fixed-term contract staff (excluding administrative staff),
- Small equipment,
- Consumables,
- Travels, up to a maximum of €2,000,
- Provision of services/subcontracting, if they relate only to the execution of a very limited part of the project (maximum 10% of the budget).

No environmental costs or management fees are eligible.

Funding must be **realistic, reasonable, detailed line by line**, and **fully justified**.

For any question regarding the budget, please see: [Guideline to Eligible Expenses](#)

Co-financing of the selected project is possible as long as no conflict of interest exists.

The lead applicant will be responsible for the management of the allocated funds, including, where applicable, the agreement and distribution to the partner teams.

An agreement will be established between the organization managing the research programme (organization of the main leader) and FFRD. **The management organization will not be able to charge any management fee on the amount granted.** FFRD manages the financial support provided by ASL-HSP and oversees the scientific and budgetary aspects of the winning projects. FFRD does not charge any fees on the sums entrusted to it by ASL-HSP; these will be paid in full to the winning projects.

Submission process, Selection and Scheduled

⁵ **Public research organization:** The public research sector includes entities, organized under public law, that carry out research and experimental development (R&D) for the government, higher education institutions or non-profit institutions (associations and foundations).

The application form, in English, must be completed at <https://ffrd.syntosolution.com/> before **May 4, 2026, 5pm** (Paris time).

You must have already created your profile on the application platform before submitting (a delay may be necessary). Technical support for the platform is available from 9am to 6pm until April 30, 2026.

The joint selection by the ASL-HSP association and FFRD will take place on the basis of:

- validation of the eligibility criteria by FFRD,
- priorities of the ASL-HSP association,
- evaluations by independent external experts (see Annex);
- final scientific opinion, issued by the scientific advisory board (SAB) of ASL-HSP association.

The members of the ASL-HSP Association boards and the external experts sign a confidentiality and a non-conflict-of-interest agreement.

The reports, documents and filings sent to the members of the board and the SAB of ASL-HSP Association are thereby confidential.

Scientific and financial follow-up

*The ASL-HSP Association is committed to this approach with gravity and a strong sense of responsibility. The budget that its Board of Directors will commit to the selected projects comes exclusively from donations. These include donations from members, as well as funds donated by friends and families, sometimes following the death of one of their own, in a gesture of solidarity with those who are waiting and hoping. **The researchers and their management organizations are expected to adhere to this commitment.***

Half of the grant will be paid at the start of the project.

For projects longer than one year, the PI will have to share briefly by email, every 6 months, on the progress of the project (a few lines).

A complete scientific and financial report must be produced by the PI at mid-term, in order to justify the correct progress of the work and trigger the remaining payment of 40% of the grant.

A final scientific and financial report must be produced by the PI at the end of the project in order to trigger the payment of the final 10% of the grant.

It is expected that the work carried out and the results obtained at the end of the project will be promoted in the form of publications, and scientific and mainstream communications. The project leader will make himself available for the presentation of his results at a meeting organized by the ASL-HSP association.

Annex

Evaluation criteria

1. Interest and importance of the research project to meet the missions of the association.

Does this study address an important problem? Innovative potential of the expected results for exploitation and for future relevant applications? Is there a sufficient body of evidence for high quality research that supports the rationale? How is the project positioned regarding international competition in the field?

2. Quality and feasibility

Soundness of the concept, clarity, originality, and relevance of the objectives. Are the conceptual framework, design, methods techniques, and analyses adequately developed, and appropriate for the aims of the projects? Coherence and effectiveness of the work plan, including appropriateness of the timeframe, allocation of tasks and resources (financial, human, and technological resources linked to the laboratory infrastructure). Does the applicant acknowledge potential problem areas and consider alternative strategies? Effectiveness of the proposed measures to exploit and disseminate the project results.

3. Quality of the applicant

Ability of the applicant to conduct the research based on the quality of her/his CV, on the publication record and the quality of the laboratory. Competence and experience of participating research partners. Does the applicant have the right network of collaborators to undertake this type of project? If not, is it important for the Association to attract this researcher because of their skills or previous work on related subjects?

4. Budget

Budget and cost-effectiveness of the project (rational distribution of resources in relation to the project tasks, partner responsibilities and time frame).