



## Call for proposals OSCAR 2026

### « Natural history, fundamental and translational studies for calcium, cartilage and bone rare diseases »

Submission deadline for applications: May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2026, 5:00 pm (CET)

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#### Context and objectives

To date, there are over 7,000 different rare diseases affecting around 3 million people in France. These conditions are defined as impacting fewer than 5 in 10,000 individuals and collectively represent a major healthcare challenge due to their early onset, reduced life expectancy and chronic impact on quality of life. More than 450 of these diseases affect the bones, calcium levels and cartilage, and are characterised by stunted growth, fractures, limb deformities, abnormalities in bone modelling and mineralisation, and dental abnormalities. Effective treatments are lacking for about 95% of rare diseases, which is why research is so crucial.

In this context, the 'Filière de Santé Maladies Rares de l'Os, du Calcium et du Cartilage' (OSCAR), in collaboration with the Foundation for Rare Diseases (FFRD), has decided to launch a call for proposals aimed at encouraging research on the development of new therapeutics for calcium, cartilage and bone rare diseases.

OSCAR was created in 2014 following the National Plan for Rare Diseases 2. It brings together all stakeholders involved in the care, diagnosis, research and support of patients with bone, calcium and cartilage rare diseases. OSCAR aims to:

- Improve the care pathway and guidance for patients and healthcare professionals;
- Coordinate and harmonise actions between structures and actors in the sector.

FFRD is a scientific cooperation foundation created by decree of the Ministry of Higher Education and Research (MESR) on 6 February 2012. Its creation was the flagship measure of the 'research' component of the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Plan for Rare Diseases supported by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. The Foundation has deployed a team throughout France to bring together those involved in research and care in order to help diagnostic, develop new treatments for rare diseases and improve the lives of rare disease patients.

## Program description

This call aims to support **fundamental, pre-clinical and clinical research projects, conducted by young researchers and/or clinicians** (see “Eligibility” section for more details), with the objective of improving knowledge of the natural history and pathophysiology of rare diseases affecting calcium, cartilage and bone, ultimately enabling the development of innovative therapeutic approaches.

Fundamental, preclinical and clinical projects eligible under this call may cover a broad spectrum, from studies on the natural history of diseases and the identification of therapeutic targets, to the evaluation of candidate treatments in cellular or animal models. **Diagnostic research projects** are also within the scope of this call, with the objective of improving diagnostic strategies, reducing diagnostic delay, (e.g., biomarkers, functional assays, imaging, genotype–phenotype correlations, etc.).

Clinical trials involving patients and/or drugs are not eligible under this call.

Proposals addressing the natural history of diseases are particularly encouraged.

Studies should be based on rigour, quality and transparency to ensure reproducibility of results. This includes the pre-specification of protocols, ensuring adequate sample sizes and the use of effective laboratory management practices.

Projects will be funded up to a maximum of **€20,000** (see “Funding” section for more details), for a maximum duration of **24 months**.

OSCAR is the unique funder of this call. FFRD is responsible for the implementation of this call.

## Eligibility

### Projects

Projects should focus on a rare disease or group of rare diseases (as defined by the European criteria, i.e. a disease affecting no more than five in 10,000 people) that is under the scope of OSCAR:

- Rare diseases of calcium and phosphate metabolism,
- Fibrous dysplasia of bone,
- Constitutional bone diseases,
- Non-vascular Ehlers-Danlos syndromes

For more information on the eligible pathologies, please refer to the [OSCAR website](#).

Projects must address the natural history, the pathophysiology or the development of novel therapies at the pre-clinical stage (except translational research stages in large animals).

All other types of projects, such as interventional studies (etc.) will not be considered eligible.

A maximum of one (1) application can be submitted by an applicant or a research team.

**Teams founded by a research grant from OSCAR in 2024 and 2025 will not be considered eligible to this call.**

**Applications must be written in English.**

### Principal investigator

Projects must be submitted by the principal investigator of the study.

To be eligible, the applicant must meet the following requirements:

- **Belong to a laboratory or a team member of OSCAR.**
- Be an **early-career researcher or clinician**. For PhD holders, this would mean that the PhD should not have been obtained more than 10 years prior to the application deadline. For physicians, specialist medical training should have been completed no more than 10 years before the application deadline. For physicians holding both a MD and a PhD, eligibility will be assessed based on the completion date of their specialist medical training.
- Hold either:
  - a permanent position as a researcher and or clinician,
  - a fixed-term position as a researcher and/or clinician, provided that salary funding is secured for the entire duration of the project. Supporting evidence must be provided at the time of project submission via the online form. The project will not be considered eligible if such evidence is not provided in time.
- Be affiliated to the academic sector (research team working in universities, other higher education institutions or research institutes) and/or the clinical/public health sector (research team working in hospitals/public health organisations) in France.

## Funding

This call for proposals offers **financial support of up to €20,000 per project**. **Collaborative projects involving two or more research centres are highly encouraged**. Research centres are defined as research institutes.

Submitted projects should last no more than **24 months**.

Funding may cover the following expenditure, within the limits indicated:

- Temporary staff (to be recruited exclusively within the applicant's team, unlimited),
- Consumables (unlimited),
- Mission expenses (up to 10% of the total budget),
- Equipment (up to 10% of the total budget),
- Subcontracting only if fully and exclusively dedicated to the project (up to 25% of the total budget, an overrun is possible if detailed and fully justified in the project).

Only projects that meet the requirements of the FFRD's [Guide to Eligible Expenses](#) will be declared eligible. Please refer to this guide when drawing up the budget for your proposed project.

Given the amount of funding offered through this call, co-financing of projects is encouraged, provided there is no conflict of interest. However, double funding of the same item of expenditure is not permitted.

The proposed budget must be realistic and fully justified. The applicant will be responsible for managing the funds allocated.

**Overheads are not allowed by the FFRD.** FFRD grants are not subject to VAT.

## Evaluation

Proposals will be peer-reviewed by at least two national or international academic experts in the field and selected by a dedicated Scientific Committee composed of experts in the field and members of OSCAR, based on the following criteria:

- Relevance and significance of the project,
- Project quality and scientific soundness,
- Feasibility of the project,
- Innovation,
- Quality of the applicant and quality of the laboratory.

## Submission and schedule

Applications can only be submitted via the FFRD Synto online platform: <https://ffrd.syntosolution.com/>. Applications sent by e-mail or by any other means will not be considered.

The application form and the documents to be submitted are detailed on the online portal. For information, this includes:

- a non-confidential abstract and an abstract for the general public (3000 characters maximum),
- a PDF file corresponding to the description of the project (research context, main findings, research projects),
- a detailed budget,
- a list of the main publications and patent by the applicant's team,
- a list of the partners of the project,
- a list of the additional sources of funding requested or received during the last two years.

*Prior to submitting their project, candidates and their directors are required to create and complete their profiles on the Synto platform. For guidance, please refer to the tutorials available in the 'Documentation' section of the Synto platform.*

*Please note that technical support is only available from the moment the call is initiated until 24 hours before the submission deadline. Candidates are responsible for identifying any potential issues in good time, as no extensions will be granted after the call for proposals has closed.*

*All communications will henceforth be sent via email through the FFRD Synto online platform. Please ensure that emails from 'FFRD by Synto' are received in a timely manner. Candidates are advised to regularly check their Synto account to monitor the progress of their application.*

Provisional schedule:

Launch of the call	April 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2026
Submission deadline for application	May 21 <sup>st</sup> , 2026 - 5:00 pm (CET)
Notification of the results	November 2026

Please note that projects should start within nine months of the funding decision being announced.

### **Administrative and financial monitoring**

A research agreement will be signed between the managing institution of the selected applicants and the FFRD. This agreement will outline the scientific and financial monitoring requirements for the project and should be signed within six months of the funding decision being made. The implementation of this policy is subject to approval by the relevant ethical bodies, where applicable.

Successful applicants will be required to submit project monitoring reports as requested by the FFRD, using the templates provided, and to report on project progress upon request. Extension clauses may be granted upon submission by the applicant of a justified request prior to the end of the project.

### **FAIR policy / IRDiRC policies and guidelines**

By submitting a project to this call, applicants agree to comply with the following requirements: [FAIR guiding principles for scientific data management and stewardship](#).

The objectives of the call are in line with the objectives of the International Rare Diseases Research Consortium (IRDiRC). Applicants are expected to follow [IRDiRC policies and guidelines](#).

### **Communication**

Successful applicants must agree that the title and non-confidential abstract of funded projects, as well as the name and affiliation(s) of the principal investigator(s), will be made public and published on the FFRD's website (<http://fondation-maladiesrares.org>) and may be used in other communications by the FFRD and OSCAR.

**The successful applicants commit themselves to participate to the National Day of Oscar, on November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2026 for an official announcement, and lately, to the “Journée Recherche OSCAR”.**

Please be aware that the names and affiliations of the principal investigator(s), the project title, summary and budget of all submitted projects will be shared by the FFRD with the OSCAR department office. In addition, for funded projects, the entire project, anonymised reviews and project reports will be shared by the FFRD with the OSCAR department office.

### **Acknowledgment policy**

Successful applicants must acknowledge the FFRD and OSCAR as the source of funding in all communications related to the project (posters, oral presentations, scientific publications, etc.) using the terms "Foundation For Rare Diseases" or "Fondation Maladies Rares" and "Filière OSCAR" or "Filière de Santé Maladies Rares OSCAR" and/or their logos (available on request).

Reference(s) to the publication(s) must be sent to the FFRD and OSCAR by e-mail to [aap-bio@fondation-maladiesrares.com](mailto:aap-bio@fondation-maladiesrares.com) and [filiere.oscar@aphp.fr](mailto:filiere.oscar@aphp.fr) .

**Contact**

Please contact [arielle.peche@fondation-maladiesrares.com](mailto:arielle.peche@fondation-maladiesrares.com) with any questions relating to this call.