

## Call for proposals ORKiD 2026

### « Innovative therapeutic approaches for kidney rare diseases »

Submission deadline for applications: May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2026, 5:00 pm (CET)

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#### Context and objectives

Rare diseases, which affect around 3 to 5% of the world's population and are defined as having a prevalence of less than 1 in 2,000 people. In France, almost three million people are affected by rare diseases, among which 30 000 suffered from a rare kidney disease. There are around 300 different rare kidney diseases, which can be divided into three groups: (1) congenital renal developmental abnormalities; (2) monogenic renal diseases; and (3) nephrotic syndromes and acquired glomerular diseases.

Although individually rare, these diseases present a significant public health challenge, with 95% of them having no treatment to date. Therefore, research is essential for developing of new therapies.

In this context, the 'Filière Orphan Kidney Diseases' (ORKiD), in collaboration with the Foundation For Rare Diseases (FFRD), has decided to launch a call for proposals to encourage the development of new therapeutic approaches for rare kidney diseases.

[ORKiD](#) (Orphan Kidney Diseases) is a 'Filière de Santé Maladies Rares' that was created following the National Plan for Rare Diseases 2, to promote interconnection between expert centres, research laboratories and patient associations in order to improve patient care. It also plays a role in coordinating fundamental, translational, and clinic research.

The [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 2nd 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 diagnose rare diseases, develop new treatments for rare diseases and improve the lives of rare disease patients.

## Program description

The aim of this call is to encourage **the development of projects based on the use of biobanks and functional assays, with the ultimate goal of devising therapeutic strategies** for orphan kidney diseases.

Two types of projects are expected through this call:

### (1) Projects based on the use of biobanks

Although they are a wealth of information for the development of treatments, several biobanks for rare kidney diseases exist and are often underused. This is why all submitted projects must be based on the use of one or more declared biobanks. The use of biobanks is also an important recommendation of the PNRM4.

### (2) Projects based on the use of functional assays

Functional assays are experimental procedures used to evaluate the biological activity of a substance. They are essential for testing the efficacy of potential therapies. The models on which the molecules will be tested must be relevant in terms of the pathology studied and the transferability of the results to humans.

There are no restrictions associated with the project's preclinical research stage, or with the therapeutic strategy or approach that will be used.

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** for a maximum duration of **24 months**. ORKiD is the unique funder of this call. The 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) under the scope of ORKiD. For more information on the eligible pathologies, please refer to the [ORKiD website](#).

Projects must propose innovative therapeutical strategies for rare kidney diseases.

All other types of projects, such as the development of a diagnostic tool for a rare disease, the creation of a new model for a rare disease, the establishment or extension of natural history studies and/or patient registries, clinical research projects or interventional studies (etc.) will not be considered eligible.

This call is not open to translational research steps in large animals.

### Principal investigator

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

To be eligible, the applicant must:

- Either have a permanent position as a researcher and or clinician,

- Or have a non-permanent position as a researcher and/or clinician but can demonstrate that its salary will be covered for the entire duration of the project. 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.
- In all cases, be affiliated to the French academic sector (research team working in universities, other higher education institutions or research institutes) and/or the French clinical/public health sector (research team working in hospitals/public health organisations).

## Funding

This call offers financial support of **up to €20,000 per project**. Submitted **projects should last up to 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 25% 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.

Please, refer to the FFRD's [Guide to Eligible Expenses](#) while designing the budget of your project. Any project that does not meet these criteria may be declare ineligible.

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 of members of ORKiD, 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.

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	March 12 <sup>th</sup> , 2026
Submission deadline for application	May 7 <sup>th</sup> , 2026 - 5:00 pm (CET)
Notification of the results	December 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.

### **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 ORKiD. The PI will make himself/herself available for the presentation of the project at the Journée annuelle de la Filière ORKiD in December 2026.

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 ORKiD

department office. In addition, for funded projects, the entire project, anonymised reviews and project reports will be shared by the FFRD with the ORKiD department office.

### **Acknowledgment policy**

Successful applicants must acknowledge FFRD and ORKiD 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 "ORKiD" and/or their logos (available on request).

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

### **Contact**

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