King Baudouin Foundation
Working together for a better society

JOINT CALL FOR RESEARCH ON CYSTIC FIBROSIS

2025 - 2026

The Fund Alphonse and Jean Forton has been created to support research on cystic fibrosis and related diseases in Belgium. It is managed by the King Baudouin Foundation with the help of a Steering Committee.

The Belgian Cystic Fibrosis Association is the patient organisation of and for people with cystic fibrosis and their families in Belgium. The Association supports activities aiming at empowering patients and their families, at improving quality of life and CF care and gives grants to researchers pursuing innovative research on the disease.

Call 2025-2026: starting from research priorities in CF

The Fund Alphonse and Jean Forton & the Belgian Cystic Fibrosis Association are launching a fourth joint **call for research projects on Cystic Fibrosis.**

In supporting research, The Fund Alphonse and Jean Forton & the Belgian Cystic Fibrosis Association strive for maximum impact. For both organisations, it is essential that research outcomes not only advance scientific knowledge but also contribute to closing medical-therapeutic gaps and improving the quality of life of people with CF and family members. This means that the criteria of scientific excellence and addressing unmet needs are given equal importance and must go hand in hand. Therefore, this fourth joint call for proposals is based on the 10 research priorities identified in 2022 by the Cystic Fibrosis Trust*.
*https://www.cysticfibrosis.org.uk/research/your-cf-research-priorities

muco.be & Fund Alphonse and Jean Forton
managed by the King Baudouin Foundation

Projects may involve fundamental, translational, clinical, or psychosocial research.
However, to be eligible, they must address at least one of the following 10 research priorities:

CF-Trust Research priorities:

1. *What options are available for those not able to take current CFTR modulators (including rarer mutations, not eligible and unable to tolerate)?*
2. *What is the best way to diagnose lung infection when there is no sputum e.g. children and those on modulators?*
3. *How can we relieve gastro-intestinal symptoms, such as stomach pain, bloating and nausea?*
4. *How do we manage an ageing population with CF?*
5. *Is there a way of reducing the negative effects of antibiotics e.g. resistance risk and adverse symptoms in people with CF?*
6. *What are the long-term effects of medications (including CFTR modulators) in CF?*
7. *What are the effects of modulators on systems outside the lungs such as pancreatic function, liver disease, gastrointestinal, bone density etc?*
8. *What are the effective ways of simplifying the treatment burden of people with CF?*
9. *Can genetic therapies (such as gene editing, stem cell and mRNA technology) be used as a treatment for CF?*
10. *Is there a way of preventing CF related diabetes (CFRD) in people with CF*

Eligible applicants

The call is open to researchers or research teams within universities or research centres (including universities of applied sciences) in Belgium. Multi-centre research is encouraged (i.e. with proof of collaboration between researchers from different disciplines and centres regarding the content of the research, inclusion of patients and logistic cooperation).
Collaboration with international research teams is possible, but there must be a strong and evident Belgian contribution, i.e. realization of a well-developed work package by an autonomously functioning Belgian team.
Past grantees may resubmit a project provided they are in compliance with the requested reporting for previously supported projects.
For-profit organizations (e.g. pharmaceutical companies) can be part of a research team but are excluded from funding.

Assessment criteria

Alignment of the project with at least 1 of the 10 research priorities set out by the CF community

Scientific quality of the project

- Rigour of the research design and methodology, including well defined work packages & milestones, sample calculation and statistics, etc.
- Novelty of the project
- Adequacy of the budget
- Feasibility of the proposed study, including feasibility to complete the study by the end of 2030.
- How equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) is taken into account in the project design

Relevance/added-value of the research to existing knowledge/clinical practices

- The project addresses clearly identified gaps in current knowledge
- The proposal includes an assessment of the necessity and relevance of the research question, including the patient perspective
- The potential impact of the results on diagnosis / prognosis /treatment/quality of care/society is clearly described.

Scientific environment

- Potential of the research team: competences, creativity, management skills, international visibility
- In case of collaborations: added value of these collaborations

Dissemination of the study results

- Plan of implementation & follow up of the research results.
- Knowledge transfer plan
- The proposal includes a clear plan for the communication of the study results towards all relevant stakeholders, including people with CF and their families.

Involvement of stakeholders

- Who are the key stakeholders? How will they be involved in the research project?
- Explain how the patient perspective is taken into account in the design of the project

Potential impact of the research project

- Scientific impact
- Societal impact

For details on the assessment criteria, see annex I (pages 6-7).

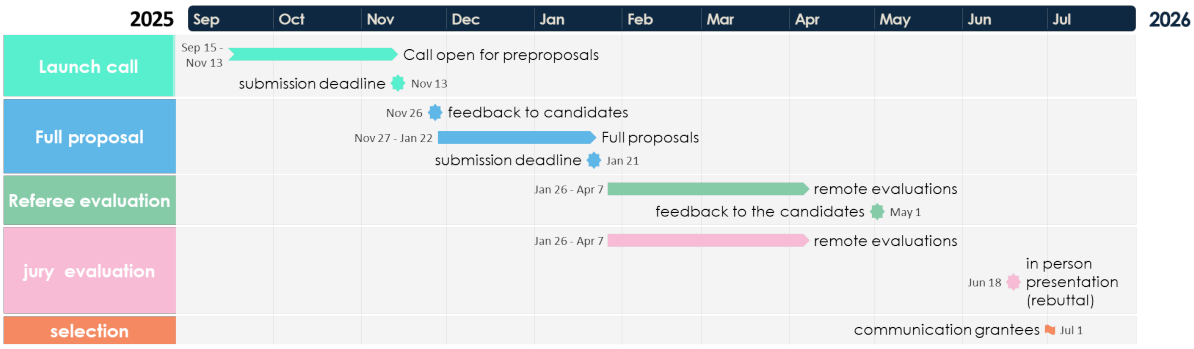
Grants
For this joint call, a total budget of € 1.500.000 has been made available. The minimum amount that may be requested per project is €100,000, and the maximum is €300.000€. The jury and the Steering Committee reserve the right to allocate less than the requested amount.
Budget restrictions: in the case of purchase/leasing of hardware and technical installations, the grant will only cover a maximum of 50% of the required budget for this specific item.
Concerning the salaries of PhD's and/or postdocs, the generally applicable wage scales should be followed. Salary costs can only be covered for applicants working at a Belgian institution
Overhead: If any overhead is taken, this overhead cannot exceed 17%, and should be included in the budget.

Assessment Process (November 2025 - June 2026)
Preproposal: all candidates can submit a preproposal in English online by 13 November 2025 at the latest via the website of the King Baudouin Foundation www.kbs-frb.be.
All preproposals are subject to a first selection based on the following criteria:

- *Does the project align with at least one of the research priorities?*
- *Can the proposed research project contribute to solving the mentioned research priority?*
- *Are the appropriate stakeholders involved in the research project?*
- *Is the budget within the call's constraints?*

Full proposal: preselected candidates will be invited to submit a full proposal in English online by 21 January 2026 at the latest via the website of the King Baudouin Foundation www.kbs-frb.be.
Assessment full proposals & shortlisting: the full proposals will be evaluated by international expert referees and an independent jury composed of experts from various fields, including scientists, clinicians, and allied health professionals. In parallel, a panel of patient representatives will assess the projects from a patient perspective. This process will allow the creation of a shortlist of candidates who will be invited to participate in the final and decisive round.
In person presentation: shortlisted applicants will be invited for an in-person presentation of their project to the jury members on **18 June 2026**. At the beginning of May 2026, they will receive the questions and comments from the referees and jury members to help them prepare for this presentation.
Final selection: following a deliberative discussion, the jury will submit a final selection proposal to the Steering Committee of the Fund Alphonse and Jean Forton and to the board of Muco.be, who will make the final decision by the end of June at the latest.
All candidates will receive brief feedback on their application in due course.

Timeline:



Contact

- For technical assistance during applying:
  Contact center – Tel +32-(0)2 500 45 55
- For information regarding the call:
  Scientific secretariat of the Fund Alphonse and Jean Forton: Annemie T'Seyen
  Mail to: tseyen.a@kbs-frb.be

King Baudouin Foundation

The King Baudouin Foundation's mission is to contribute to a better society in Belgium, in Europe and elsewhere in the world. It is an actor for change and innovation, serving the public interest and increasing social cohesion. It seeks to maximise its impact by improving skills in organisations and for individuals. It also stimulates effective philanthropy by individuals and corporations. The King Baudouin Foundation was set up in 1976, on the 25th anniversary of King Baudouin's reign.

With thanks to the National Lottery and its players, and also to our many donors for their ongoing commitment.

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Belgian Cystic Fibrosis Association (muco.be)

"For a better and longer life for people with CF and their families."

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Annex I: Evaluation Criteria

Topic		1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10
		insufficient	**weak**	**fair**	**Very good**	**excellent**
Scientific quality of the project	**research priority**	The project doesn't address any of the research priorities set out by the CF Community	It is unclear from the application if it addresses any of the research priorities set out by the CF Community	The project addresses at least 1 of the research priorities set out by the CF Community and is scientifically relevant	The project is original and significantly contributes to resolving at least one research priority set out by the CF Community	The project is groundbreaking and addresses at least one research priority set out by the CF Community
	prior research	The prior research that serves as the key support for the project is insufficient	It is unclear what the prior research is to support the proposed project	The prior research that serves as the key support of the project is convincing	There is strong prior research that serves as the key support for the project	There is excellent prior research that serves as the key support for the project
	quality	The research project is of low quality and lacks focus	the research project is not clearly written, has major shortcomings	The research project is of good quality and it is clearly written	The research project is of very good quality and it is clearly written	The research project is of exceptional quality and it is very well written
	novelty	The approach is not novel or not appropriate to address the research question	There are major concerns regarding the novelty of the approach or about the appropriateness of the approach to address the research question	There are minor concerns regarding the novelty of the approach, or about the appropriateness of the approach to address the research question	The approach is novel and appropriate to address the research question	The approach is exceptionally novel, creative and appropriate to address the research question
	budget	The budget is not appropriate, not justified and/or the distribution is not justified	There are major concerns regarding the appropriateness of the budget	There are minor concerns regarding the appropriateness of the budget	The project budget is appropriate	The project budget is appropriate and exceptionally well elaborated
	feasibility	There is a mismatch between the research goals and the research methodology. OR The research activities are too limited for the proposed grant period	The research methodology and project planning do not align well with the project objectives. The intrinsic feasibility is low. OR The objectives are unclear, making it difficult to evaluate their feasibility.	The research methodology is reasonable but with some shortcomings or a lesser fit to the research objectives. OR The feasibility is less realistic, but it is likely that part of the scientific goals will be reached.	The research methodology and planning are well elaborated and justified, and suitable to reach the objectives. The intrinsic feasibility is good. Risks are identified and dealt with. AND The project fits well in the research activities of the research group	The research methodology and planning are well elaborated and justified, and suitable to reach the targeted scientific objectives. The intrinsic feasibility is good AND The research risks are identified and alternative research strategies and fall back research option are proposed. AND The project fits well in the research activities of the research group
	EDI in research design	EDI considerations in the research design are not described.	The application insufficiently demonstrates how EDI considerations are embedded in the research design	Some relevant EDI considerations are missing from the project proposal	Diversity factors affecting the research question have been identified and taken into account in the research design.	Diversity factors affecting the research question have been identified and relevant knowledge gaps and limitations of previous studies have been identified. The way the research question applies to different groups is very well described. Contextual factors and potential biases

						are taken into account in the research design
implementation, communication and knowledge transfer plan		There is no clear plan for implementation of the research results, communication and knowledge transfer	The plan for implementation of the research results, communication and knowledge transfer is unclear or missing crucial steps	The plan for implementation of the research results, communication and knowledge transfer is missing minor steps	There is a clear plan for implementation of the research results, communication and knowledge transfer	There is a detailed and clear plan for implementation of the research results, communication and knowledge transfer
scientific environment	**research team**	The research team is lacking crucial competences to bring this project to success	There are major concerns whether the research team has the necessary competences.	The research team lacks one or more essential competences, but they have included mitigation strategies (trainings, co-applicants/collaborators with the necessary skills…)	The research team has good demonstratable competences to bring the project to success	The research team has excellent competences to bring the project to success
	collaborations	The collaboration lacks essential expertise, and/or there is too much overlap between the disciplines/expertise in the collaboration	There are major concerns regarding the complementarity and interdisciplinarity of the collaboration	There are minor concerns regarding the complementarity and interdisciplinarity of the collaboration	The team consists of a strong complementary and interdisciplinary collaboration	The team consists of an unquestionably strong complementary and interdisciplinary collaboration
Stakeholder involvement	**stakeholder management**	No description of how the relevant stakeholders will be implicated throughout the research project.	One or more essential stakeholders are missing from the collaboration	Some additional stakeholders would benefit the collaboration	The appropriate (group of) stakeholders is involved throughout the different stages of the collaboration	Stakeholders from different groups are being consulted out their specific needs. Inclusivity is taken into account in the dissemination, including formats and language used.
	patient involvement	The patient perspective is lacking in the design of the research project. Concrete evidence of how patients are involved in the research process is lacking	The patient perspective insufficiently taken into account OR patients are not involved in key stages of the research project	There are minor concerns whether the patient perspective is taken into account throughout the project. OR Patients are not sufficiently involved in key stages of the project.	The patient perspective is taken into account throughout the project. Patients are involved in all stages of the project including project design.	The patient perspective is taken into account throughout the project. Patients are integrated in the research team and contribute in all stages of the project including project design.
Potential impact	**scientific impact**	No substantial increase in scientific knowledge, technical capability and/or clinical practice is likely to result when the aims of the project are achieved	Only a limited increase in scientific knowledge, technical capability and/or clinical practice is likely to result when the aims of the project are achieved	An increase in scientific knowledge, technical capability and/or clinical practice is likely to result when the aims of the project are achieved	An important increase in scientific knowledge, technical capability and/or clinical practice is likely to result when the aims of the project are achieved	a very significant increase in scientific knowledge, technical capability and/or clinical practice is likely to result when the aims of the project are achieved
	societal impact	When the aims of the project are achieved, no substantial change to concepts, methods, interventions, quality of care or quality of life of the target population can be expected	When the aims of the project are achieved, limited change to concepts, methods, interventions, quality of care or quality of life of the target population can be expected	When the aims of the project are achieved, change to concepts, methods, interventions, quality of care or quality of life of the target population can be expected	When the aims of the project are achieved, important change to concepts, methods, interventions, quality of care or quality of life of the target population can be expected	When the aims of the project are achieved, a very significant change to concepts, methods, interventions, quality of care or quality of life of the target population can be expected