



## **CENTENNIAL CALL FOR COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH: “PATIENT TRAJECTORIES IN RHEUMATIC AND MUSCULOSKELETAL DISEASES IN THE BELGIAN HEALTHCARE LANDSCAPE”**

### **Background and Context**

On the occasion of the centennial anniversary of the Royal Belgian Society of Rheumatology, the Fund for Scientific Research in Rheumatology, managed by the King Baudouin Foundation, launches an **exceptional call to support collaborative research addressing patient trajectories** in rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases (RMDs) within the Belgian healthcare system, alongside its [annual call for projects](#).

RMDs represent a major cause of disability and healthcare utilization in Belgium. Understanding how patients navigate the healthcare system, from first symptoms and referral pathways to diagnosis, treatment, long-term management, and outcomes, is essential to improve patient care, optimize healthcare delivery, and inform health policy. This call specifically aims to stimulate collaborative research that generates **new insights into the clinical, epidemiological, healthcare, and biological determinants shaping patient trajectories**. Research addressing common as well as rare RMDs will be accepted.

### **Scope of the Call**

This call supports research projects investigating patient trajectories in RMDs, including but not limited to:

- Referral pathways and diagnostic delays
- Access to specialized rheumatology care
- Variations in treatment strategies and outcomes
- Healthcare utilization and value of care
- Integration of multidisciplinary care models
- Biomarker or translational approaches linked to clinical trajectories
- Patient experience and preferences

Projects may adopt a variety of approaches, including

- Clinical research
- Epidemiological studies
- Qualitative research
- Health services research
- Health policy or healthcare value-oriented analyses
- Translational studies integrating biomarker or laboratory components

Applications combining multiple approaches are particularly welcome.



## Funding

- **Total funding available:** €150,000 to support a **single project**
- **Project duration:** 2 years - Applicants are invited to explicitly demonstrate how the project structure ensures the achievement of tangible results within the allocated 24-month timeframe.
- **Eligible costs:** All project-related expenses, including overhead, which is limited to max. 17%

## Collaborative Requirements

Projects must demonstrate clear national collaboration.

- Involvement of at least two research centres in Belgium
- collaboration across different language communities is strongly encouraged
- Opportunities for collaboration with other healthcare disciplines should be explored where they add value to the project.

Examples of relevant partners may include:

- Epidemiologists
- Health economists
- Data scientists
- Primary care physicians
- Rehabilitation specialists
- Specialist nurses or other allied health professionals
- Patient associations

Applications should follow the revised recommendations on patient involvement in research from European Alliance of Associations for Rheumatology (EULAR). Applicants should integrate Patient Research Partners (PRPs) in the design and conduct of the study.

## Eligibility

### Applicant organizations

The Foundation will only fund not-for-profit organizations. For-profit organizations (e.g. pharmaceutical companies) can be part of a research team but are excluded from funding.

### Main applicant

The Main applicant must:

- Be a certified adult or pediatric rheumatologist
- Be affiliated with a Belgian academic or clinical institution
- Demonstrate identifiable research experience
- Rheumatologists in training may participate in the project but cannot serve as the Main applicant.



The main applicant may not apply to this call more than once as main applicant but may apply as a co-applicant on more than one application.

Applicants may apply to both the FWRO-FRSR 2026 annual call and the KBVR-SRBR "100 Years" call, but may serve as Main Applicant on only one project overall. Submitting the same project to both calls is not permitted.

### **Application Requirements**

Applicants must submit a proposal including:

- A clear research question and hypothesis
- A detailed research strategy and analysis plan
- Description of the collaborative structure
- Plan for patient involvement
- Budget justification

Applications should clearly describe how the project will generate insights into patient trajectories within the Belgian healthcare landscape and how the findings may contribute to improving care.

### **Ethical questions & gender issues**

- A description of how ethical issues, if any, are taken into account. If the project has to be submitted to an Ethics Committee, researchers should send the ethical approval before the project can start (but not before the introduction of the application).
- A description of how gender/diversity issues, if any, are taken into account.

### **Evaluation Criteria**

Applications will be evaluated by an independent international scientific jury based on the following criteria:

- Scientific quality of the proposal
- Appropriateness of methods
- Robustness of the analytical strategy
- Potential impact on care for patients with RMDs in Belgium
- Strength and complementarity of the collaboration
- Quality of Patient Research Partner involvement

## **PROCEDURE**

If interested, please submit an online application in English via the [website](#) of the King Baudouin Foundation.

The applications should be submitted by **1 October 2026** at midnight at the latest.

Candidates will receive an acknowledgement of receipt.

## **SELECTION**

Applications will be submitted to an independent international scientific jury.



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The jury will assess the projects and will draw up recommendations for the Fund Steering Committee managed by the King Baudouin Foundation, which will make the final decision.

The decision will be published in November 2026.

## CONTACT KING BAUDOUIIN FOUNDATION

- For technical assistance during applying:  
Contact center – Tel +32 (0)2 500 45 55 – [proj@kbs-frb.be](mailto:proj@kbs-frb.be)
- For information regarding the call:  
Scientific secretariat of the Fund for scientific research in rheumatology FWRO-FRSR, Annemie T'Seyen -  
Tel +32 (0)2 549 03 03 - [tseyen.a@kbs-frb.be](mailto:tseyen.a@kbs-frb.be)

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### King Baudouin Foundation

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