



BAILLET LATOUR BIOMEDICAL AWARD

Supporting Research Careers in Belgium

2026 Topic: "Metabolism & Gastrointestinal System"

GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS

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1. Introduction

1.1. Philosophy of the Baillet Latour Fund

Since its establishment over 40 years ago, the Fund has rewarded and supported biomedical research. To this end, it has incepted several prestigious Prizes, among which the International Health Prize or the Clinical Prize later replaced by the Grant for Medical Research.

In order to amplify its impact in the biomedical field and to meet the actual challenges in R&D, the Fund has decided to redirect its support towards the development in Belgium of an ecosystem of high-level researchers to help accelerating the development of innovative research projects.

With the Baillet Latour Biomedical Award, the Baillet Latour Fund wishes to offer major support to basic, clinical or translational biomedical research in Belgium.

The Fund also wishes to strengthen the status and visibility of promising young researchers in Belgium and to support their development towards eminent independent research leaders in their field.

It additionally seeks to facilitate their grant applications to Belgian and European funding sources for their innovative research and intends to contribute to retaining promising new talents and to attract foreign ones.

1.2. Objective of the call

The Baillet Latour Biomedical Award will be granted to independent investigators of any nationality in the early phase of their career to conduct basic, clinical, or translational biomedical research in Belgium and to consolidate their independent research team or programme.

1.3. Main features of the Award

➤ Funding:

The Award amounts to **1.000.000 € over 5 years to support a research project** in one of the five biomedical domains selected by the Baillet Latour Fund (see page 5). The topic of the 2026 Award is "Metabolism & Gastrointestinal System".

➤ Support breakdown:

A first instalment of 400.000 € will be credited to the Host Institution at the start of the funding period. A second instalment of 200.000 € will be credited at the beginning of year 3. The third and fourth instalment of 200.000 € each, to be made available at the beginning of years 4 and 5, will be subject to the positive evaluation of a mid-term report.

➤ Eligible expenses:

Eligible expenses encompass personnel costs (excluding the salary of the PI), running costs and equipment. No overheads are allowed.

2. Timeline of the call

- Opening of the call: June 16th, 2025
- **Deadline of the call: September 15th, 2025**
- First Panel meeting: February 2026
- Second Panel meeting: March 2026
- Award ceremony: April 2026
- Start of the Award: July 1st, 2026

3. How to apply?

3.1. Application process

Applications must be submitted in English using the [online application system](#) no later than **September 15th, 2025** (midnight CEST).

A « save and continue » module allows the applicants to quit the system and to come back working on their application at a later stage. Once the applicants quit the system, an automatic e-mail is sent to their e-mail address with a link to return to their application form.

The submitted application file consists of:

- The administrative part
- The research proposal
- An updated CV
- A complete list of publications
- The supporting documentation (Host Institution support letter, any documentation needed on eligibility matters)

All applications will be checked to ensure that administrative eligibility criteria are met before being processed to the evaluation stage.

3.2. Eligibility criteria

- Principal Investigator

The **Principal Investigator (PI)** may be of any nationality but must hold a PhD degree that has **been awarded no more than 12 years prior to the deadline of the call** (i.e. September 15th, 2025).

This 12-year period can be extended by the duration of certain properly documented **career breaks that have occurred after the PhD has been awarded**. The following career breaks supported by official statements will be considered for the extension of the eligibility period:

- For maternity, the documented period of maternity leave (up to a maximum of 18 months) for each child born or adopted after the PhD award.
- For paternity, the documented period of paternity leave (up to a maximum of 18 months) for each child born or adopted after the PhD award.

- For national service, the documented period of occupation after the PhD award.
- For long-term illness, the documented amount of leave actually taken by the Principal Investigator for each incident that occurred after the PhD award. Long-term illness is considered as a period of ≥ 90 days for the PI or a close family member (child, spouse, parent or sibling).
- For specialty training of MD-PhD, the documented period of specialty training up to a maximum of 24 months after the PhD award.

In case the PI has obtained several PhD degrees, the effective elapsed time to be taken into consideration for the eligibility period will be that of the first PhD.

The PI must be affiliated to a Belgian University, a Belgian University Hospital, or an eligible Research Institute (see below) at the deadline of the call.

The PI is also required to have a full-time position and a secured salary for at least five years beyond the start of the BLBA until at least June 30th, 2031.

➤ Host Institution

The research must be conducted in a public research Institution in Belgium, referred to as a Host Institution (HI). This can be the HI where the PI applicant already works, or another HI located in Belgium. **The recognized HIs are the universities, the university hospitals and the following research institutes:**

- Institute of Tropical Medicine Antwerp
- LABIRIS
- Flemish Institute for Biotechnology (VIB)
- Flemish Institute for Technological research (VITO)
- de Duve Institute
- Bordet Institute
- GIGA Institute
- Sciensano
- Belgian Nuclear Research Center (SCK CEN)

➤ Biomedical research field

The research to be supported by the "Baillet Latour Biomedical Awards" (BLBA) must pertain to the topic of the year of the Award. The following five topics will rotate on an annual basis:

- **2026: Metabolism and Gastrointestinal System**
- 2027: Infection and Immunity
- 2028: Neurosciences
- 2029: Cancer
- 2030: Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Systems

4. Evaluation process

4.1. Selection principles

The selection process is designed to ensure fairness, transparency, impartiality, consistency, and independence in order to identify the best research project irrespective of gender, age, beliefs, nationality, political or sexual orientation of the PI.

It is based on a **three-step evaluation procedure** performed by international experts.

4.2. Evaluation workflow

➤ Step 1 – Independent remote evaluation

Each eligible application will be evaluated (scored and commented) by several remote experts (high-level experts in the remit of the call working outside Belgium).

Applicants have the opportunity to identify up to 3 experts worldwide they do not wish to see acting as evaluator of their application.

All remote experts involved in the evaluation process will have to sign a non-disclosure agreement, a data protection agreement and a non-conflict of interest form. Panel members will be informed of the remote experts' identity.

➤ Step 2 – First Panel meeting

The **first Panel meeting** will be held online **in February 2026**.

All applications will be collegially evaluated by a high-level international Panel composed of 5 top experts in the remit of the call working outside Belgium (1 Chair and 4 members). Each application will be introduced by a rapporteur and a co-rapporteur and will then be discussed by all members with an objective **to identify a shortlist of top candidates to be invited to make a presentation of their research project**. Each application file is composed of the application form, support material and associated remote evaluations.

All Panel members will have to sign a non-disclosure agreement, a data protection agreement and a non-conflict of interest form.

The composition of the Panel will be disclosed at the announcement of the laureate.

➤ Step 3 – Second Panel meeting

The **second Panel meeting** will be held online **in March 2026**.

Selected applicants will have 20 minutes to present their research project to the Panel members and 10 minutes max. will then be devoted to a Q&A session. At the end of the presentations, the Panel members will hold a final discussion round **to identify a laureate**.

A representative of the Baillet Latour Fund will attend the 2 Panel meetings as an Observer. The role of the Observer is to ensure respect for the procedure and the philosophy of the Award. He/she will not participate in the evaluation procedure and will have no vote in the decision making.

At the end of the selection process, feedback is provided to applicants under the form of individual Evaluation Summary Reports (ESRs) drafted by the rapporteurs and validated by the Chair of the Selection Panel. No redress procedure is foreseen.

4.3. Evaluation criteria

Each application must be evaluated against the following three evaluation criteria:

- **Quality of the Principal Investigator – 40%** (CV and publications, leadership in the field, scientific achievements and independence)

- **Quality of the project – 40%** (clarity of the project, preliminary results, soundness of the hypothesis, appropriateness of the approach, feasibility, originality, methodology, and focus of the project)
- **Potential impact of the research – 20%** (for science, health professionals, patients, society)

4.4. Scoring scale

Each evaluation criterion should be scored using the following scale:

- score **5 = Excellent**. The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.
- score **4 = Very Good**. The proposal addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present.
- score **3 = Good**. The proposal addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present.
- score **2 = Fair**. The proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.
- score **1 = Poor**. The criterion is inadequately addressed, or there are serious inherent weaknesses.
- score **0 = Irrelevant**. The proposal fails to address the criterion.

4.5. Final decision

The Award will be granted by the Board of Directors of the Baillet Latour Fund on basis of the recommendation of the Panel.

5. Research integrity

Research integrity is of utmost importance. All experts involved in the evaluation process will be asked to pay specific attention to scientific misconduct such as fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, or misrepresentation of data. The evaluation of the mid-term report will also be an opportunity to check on it.

Funded researchers are expected to strictly comply to all institutional rules and regulations that apply in terms of research integrity. In case of integrity breach suspicion or allegation, the Baillet Latour Fund will take the appropriate measures.

6. Open science

The scientific outputs stemming from research supported by the Baillet Latour Biomedical Award should be valorised to maximise societal benefits.

To this end the Baillet Latour Fund supports the publication in Open Access, with a preference for the deposit requirement of publications resulting from the funded project (Green Open access).

The facilitation of the free access to these research outputs not only aims at the benefit of the scientific community but is also meant to increase both national and international visibility of the researchers.

7. Ethics

Research projects may require consideration of ethical problems that might arise or that are inherent to the submitted research project. The possible ethical problems may relate to the use and storage of private data, the handling of substances that may cause environmental or biodiversity damage and the research on animals or human beings (non-exhaustive list).

It will be the responsibility of the laureate of the Award to submit an ethical clearance provided by his/her local ethics committee to the "Baillet Latour Fund" (should the project raise any ethical issues).

8. Feedback to Applicants

Applicants will receive max. 5 feedbacks during the evaluation of their application:

- Acknowledgment of the submission of their application
- Information on the outcome of the administrative eligibility check
- Information on the outcome of step 1 of the evaluation (identification of the shortlisted candidates who will be invited to an interview)
- Information on the outcome of step 2 of the evaluation (identification of the laureate)
- Evaluation summary reports of their application

No redress procedure is foreseen.

9. Contact

For any information pertaining to the Call, please contact the FNRS' Scientific Prizes Unit via email to prix@frs-fnrs.be.