

Fondation Quancer: Open Call 2026

1. Introduction

Fondation Quancer invites early-career researchers to submit patient-oriented oncology research projects that harness patient-derived data and/or patient-derived specimens to advance translational and clinical cancer research. The primary objective is to support studies that utilise high-quality, patient-centric resources to interrogate disease mechanisms, identify novel biomarkers, improve therapeutic stratification, and enhance clinical decision-making across the cancer continuum.

2. Research Scope

This call supports translational oncology research projects that leverage patient-derived data and/or patient-derived specimens to generate insights with potential clinical relevance. Projects should aim to deepen the mechanistic understanding of cancer in ways that inform future diagnostic, prognostic, or therapeutic strategies. While a direct path to clinical implementation is not required, proposals should demonstrate clear translational intent and relevance to unmet clinical challenges.

Patient-derived data may include, but is not limited to, clinical data, real-world data, patient-reported outcomes, molecular and cellular data. Patient-derived specimens may include, but is not limited to, primary or metastatic tumour tissue, matched normal tissue, biofluids, ctDNA, organoids, xenografts derived from patient tissue.

3. Application Eligibility Requirements

- Applicants must be researchers at the postdoctoral level up to the stage prior to independent group leadership (e.g., postdocs, senior postdoc, Oberassistent, privatdozent (PD), maître d'enseignement et de recherche (MER), maître assistant (MA))
- Applicants must be affiliated with a Swiss academic or research institution (e.g., universities, EPF/ETH, university hospitals, hautes écoles spécialisées/Fachhochschulen).
- The proposed project must align with the thematic scope and objectives outlined in this open call.
- Interdisciplinary and collaborative projects are welcome.

4. Financial Information

- Applicants can request up to 150'000 CHF in funding per project. Fondation Quancer reserves the right to adjust allocated funding budgets:
 - Initial payment of 50% will be released at the beginning of the project upon approval.
 - The remaining 50% will be released following submission of a mid-term evaluation (scientific and financial). Final disbursement is subject to Fondation Quancer's assessment of progress.
- Eligible costs that are covered by awarded funding are: direct project costs including personnel salaries, consumables, fee-for-service infrastructure use, software and computing resources, costs for materials of enduring value where justified, travel costs and third-party charges.
- Ineligible costs that are not covered by awarded funding are:
 - Costs related to the employment of applicants.
 - Indirect costs such as, but not limited to, HR expenses, infrastructure, overheads including space charges, administration and costs that would exist whether or not the submitted project occurs.
- The total duration for the project must not exceed 2 years from the starting date.

5. Call timeline

Application Deadline: Wednesday, December 10th 2025 (23:59 CET).

Award Announcement: March 2026

Start of the project: Awarded projects can be launched from July 1st 2026.

6. Application Process

Applicants must submit a written application according to the provided template, encompassing the following information:

- Part A: General information
- Part B: Project description
 1. Executive summary
 2. Background and rationale
 3. Research question and objectives
 4. Methodology and experimental work

5. Patient datasets and/or clinical cohort criteria and samples
6. Milestones and timeline
7. Expected outcomes and impact

- Part C: Annexes

1. CV of the applicant
2. Letter of support of the hosting lab/group leader
3. Regulatory approval documents
4. Budget details (using provided Budget template)

Applications need to be submitted via email to quancer@proton.me until Wednesday, December 10th 2025 (23:59 CET).

7. Evaluation Process

Evaluation Criteria

- The Board Members of Fondation Quancer will review the application eligibility requirements. Applications that do not meet the requirements or that are incomplete will be deemed ineligible for consideration in the evaluation process.
- Each eligible proposal will be evaluated by a minimum of three external and independent reviewers with expertise in the field of call's scope.
- Applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria:
 - Relevance and impact
 - Scientific and methodological rigor
 - Use of patient-derived data and/or specimens
 - Feasibility
 - Candidate potential and research environment

Scoring System

- Each criterion will be scored on a scale of 1 to 6, with 6 being the highest score and 1 being the lowest.
- Reviewers will assign scores to each criterion based on the quality and relevance of the proposed research.
- The total score for each application will be calculated by summing the average scores for all criteria.
-

Conflict of Interest

- Reviewers and Board members with a conflict of interest with any applicant or project must recuse themselves from the evaluation process.

Final Decision

- Funding will be awarded to project(s) selected by the Board based on the reviewers' scores and overall merit.

Confidentiality

- All information related to the evaluation process, including application materials and discussions, will be treated confidentially.
- Reviewers are required to maintain the confidentiality of all information disclosed during the evaluation process.