Priority Research Program and Equipment
Precision psychiatry

2026 Call for applications
Junior Chair of Excellence

Application deadline :
15th of September 2026 (phase 1)
15th of November 2026 (phase 2)

Contact :
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CALL FOR APPLICATIONS
Call opens on

June 11th 2026

Preamble

Psychiatric disorders affect a significant portion of the population and pose a major challenge to healthcare systems. Their management still relies heavily on diagnostic and therapeutic approaches that struggle to account for the heterogeneity of disorders and patient trajectories. The development of precision psychiatry, integrating advances in neuroscience, genomics, artificial intelligence, and biomedicine, is crucial for improving the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of psychiatric disorders.

In this context, the Priority Research Program and Equipment (PEPR) PROPSY, funded by France 2030, aims to accelerate innovation in psychiatry and establish a French biomedical sector dedicated to mental health. In particular, this program supports the training of young researchers focused on precision psychiatry.

Thus, the PEPR PROPSY will fund **three junior chairs of excellence** in 2026 to support innovative research projects in precision psychiatry.

Closure of the call for applications

Submission materials must be submitted electronically no later than:

Phase 1 : 15th of September 2026 at 11:59pm (Paris time)
Phase 2 (detailed project) : 15th of November 2026 at 11:59 (Paris time)
Phase 2 (oral) : December 2026

It is essential to carefully read this entire document and the instructions available on the submission website :

https://appels.programmesstrategiques.inserm.fr

Contacts

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1) Context and Objectives of the Call for Projects

The **PROPSY Priority Research Program and Equipment (PEPR)** is a national program launched in 2022 and funded as part of the **France 2030** plan. It is led by **Inserm** and the **CNRS** with support from the **FondaMental Foundation**. It aims to transform the management of five disabling disorders: bipolar disorders, treatment-resistant depression, schizophrenia, autism spectrum disorder, and first-episode psychosis. These disorders represent a major public health challenge due to their high prevalence, psychosocial impact, and economic cost. They are among the leading causes of disability and reduce life expectancy by 15 to 20 years due to somatic comorbidities and suicide risks.

Strategic Objectives of the PROPSY PEPR:

- **Refine the characterization** of psychiatric disorders to identify homogeneous subgroups.
- **Identify new biomarkers (cognitive, blood-based, brain imaging, electrophysiological, digital, etc.) for stratification and/or prediction,** as well as new therapeutic targets.
- **Develop innovative therapeutic strategies** for homogeneous patient subgroups identified by objective biomarkers
- **Establish a biomedical pathway** in mental health, fostering collaboration between public research, the pharmaceutical industry, and stakeholders in medical and digital innovation
- **Strengthen training and enhance the appeal of careers** related to psychiatry and mental health research.
- **Follow and measure the economic and societal impact of innovations developed within the domain of precision psychiatry**

The PEPR PROPSY program is based on an interdisciplinary approach that combines clinical assessment, genomics**, immunology, brain imaging, computational neuroscience, and artificial intelligence**. It integrates existing databases and establishes large-scale, multimodal cohorts—notably **French Minds**—to enrich existing diagnostic classification, search for prognostic and stratification biomarkers in order to identify homogeneous subforms and optimize patient care.

In line with this initiative, this call for proposals funds **three junior chairs of excellence** dedicated to research aligned with the priorities of the PEPR PROPSY, i.e. biomarker discovery, artificial intelligence and multimodal analysis, or cost analysis. These chairs will fund ambitious research and innovation projects proposed by early-career scientists (no more than 10 years after obtaining their doctoral degree). The junior chairs will aim to foster research of the highest quality and to build an emerging scientific community in the field of precision psychiatry.

2) Research topics of the Call and expected projects

Three junior chairs of excellence will be funded under this call, each focusing on one of the **thematic area** listed below. The recipients of these chairs will be expected to contribute to the implementation of the program, help promote the thematic area at the national level (working groups, thematic workshops, initiating collaborations with industry, conferences, etc.), and help make their discipline more appealing to the younger generation. Teaching duties will not be mandatory for these chairs.

These chairs must be based within a laboratory established in France, offering a supportive scientific environment in the chosen thematic area. The recipients will receive support throughout the implementation of their project to ensure the sustainability of their work and to enable them to apply for a tenured position. The projects must be integrated into the French precision psychiatry program – PEPR PROPSY.

A. Chair 1: artificial intelligence (AI) for multimodal data analysis in precision psychiatry

Objectives

The objective of this chair will be to develop and implement **artificial intelligence** approaches to analyze multimodal data in order to stratify patients, model care pathways, and/or predict treatment responses.

The successful candidate will draw on the PEPR PROPSY cohort and databases, as well as, where appropriate, other relevant national or international datasets, particularly large-scale, multimodal cohorts (clinical data, neuroimaging, genomics/omics, digital data, environmental data). The awardee will work in close collaboration with clinical teams, biological research teams, and the teams responsible for the PEPR PROPSY data warehouse to facilitate the co-development of analyses and models integrating clinical, biological, and imaging data in order to identify and address relevant questions posed by precision psychiatry.

Scientific focus areas

Research areas may include, but are not limited to:

- The development of machine learning models (supervised, unsupervised, and self-supervised) for patient stratification
- Multimodal integration of data from the French Minds cohort (clinical, imaging, omics data, environmental and digital measurements) using AI methods

- Dynamic modeling of psychiatric trajectories (symptom progression, clinical events, treatment responses) using temporal models, dynamic networks, or advanced probabilistic models.
- The development of approaches for model interpretability and explainability (explainable AI) tailored to clinical use, to facilitate their adoption by healthcare professionals and their integration into practice.
- The development of clinical decision-making tools in close collaboration with clinical teams, laboratory departments, and data warehouse management teams.

Challenges for PEPR PROPSY

The aims of this chair for the PEPR PROPSY are to:

- Enable optimal use of the multimodal data generated by the program by leveraging cutting-edge AI methods.
- Bring together and lead an interdisciplinary community at the intersection of psychiatry, neuroscience, biology, and data science.
- Contribute to the development of analytical and decision-support tools capable of improving patient stratification and the personalization of mental health care.

Required skills

This chair is primarily intended for French or international candidates with an interest in psychiatry, who hold a PhD in science, and have demonstrated academic or industrial experience in artificial intelligence.

B. Chair 2: blood biomarkers and/or immunopsychiatry

Objectives

This research area can cover different domains of blood-based biomarker discovery, in particular: **immunology** and/or **omics area**. The successful candidate may choose to focus the chair on the immunological area **and/or** the omics area.

The objective of this chair is to contribute to the identification of **blood-based biomarkers (genomic, epigenomic, proteomic, metagenomic, metabolomic, or immunological**) for diagnostic purposes, stratification, or prediction of therapeutic responses in patients with major psychiatric disorders studied in the PEPR PROPSY project. The chair's work will be based on biological data generated by the PEPR PROPSY and/or other databases and will be conducted in collaboration with national and/or international teams working in these fields.

In particular, projects aimed at exploring, based on data collected in the PEPR PROPSY, the causes and **mechanisms underlying chronic inflammation associated with mental**

illnesses and its consequences – enabling the identification of homogeneous subgroups (autoimmune, brain-gut, microglial, retroviral, metabolic, etc.) – will receive special attention. This chair is intended to contribute, in collaboration with national and/or international teams in immunopsychiatry, to the identification of stratification biomarkers and potential therapeutic targets.

Scientific focus areas

The scientific areas covered will be as follows:

- **Immunological area**
  - Study of inflammatory and dysimmune pathways
  - Identification of the immunogenetic profile (innate, adaptive)
  - Integration of immune markers with other biological data (genomics, microbiota, neuroimaging, metabolism, mitochondria)
  - Prediction of response to anti-inflammatory or immunomodulatory treatments.

And/or :

- **Omics area**
  - Identification of single- and/or multi-modal blood biomarkers based on genetic, epigenomic, transcriptomic, metabolomic, lipidomic, and/or proteomic data
  - Calculation of integrative scores (e.g., polygenic scores)
  - Development of biomarker panels enabling patient stratification or providing predictive value (e.g., treatment response, prognosis, etc.)
  - Development and implementation of statistical methods to integrate omics data

Challenges for PEPR PROPSY

The **aims of this chair for the PEPR PROPSY** program are to:

- Gain a better understanding of the pathophysiology of psychiatric disorders, particularly their immune and inflammatory components
- Identify biomarkers, particularly immunological ones or those based on omics approaches, in order to stratify patients and pave the way for targeted therapeutic trials
- Strengthen the interface between biology, clinical practice, and patient care, in order to translate discoveries into study protocols and targeted therapeutic trials

Required skills

This chair is primarily intended for French or international candidates with an interest in psychiatry who hold a Ph.D. in a field relevant to biomarker analysis, particularly in biology, genetics, immunology, and infectious diseases, as well as in biostatistics, data science applied to health data, and multimodal data analysis.

C. Chair 3: health economics

Objectives

The objective of this chair is to analyze the **medical-economic challenges associated with the psychiatric disorders** targeted by the PEPR PROPSY (bipolar disorders, treatment-resistant depression, schizophrenia, autism spectrum disorders and first-episode psychosis), as well as to measure the economic and societal impact associated with major challenges in mental health – such as treatment resistance and somatic comorbidities (e.g., metabolic syndrome, sleep disorders, and delayed diagnosis) – and to assess, within the programs developed by the PEPR PROPSY, the economic impact of proposed diagnostic or therapeutic innovations in precision psychiatry. It aims to document the economic burden of these conditions, evaluate the efficacy of new prevention, diagnosis, and treatment strategies, measure the impact of precision psychiatry approaches, and inform prioritization decisions by mental health stakeholders.

Scientific focus areas

Research areas may include, but are not limited to:

- Estimating the direct and indirect costs of psychiatric disorders targeted by the PEPR PROPSY (healthcare, hospitalizations, treatments, sick leave, disability, social exclusion, presenteeism), with a particular focus on the additional costs associated with somatic comorbidities and treatment resistance.
- The medico-economic evaluation of diagnostic and therapeutic innovations in precision psychiatry (diagnostic, biological, or digital tools, innovative treatments, etc.), using cost-effectiveness, cost-utility, and/or budget impact analyses, while incorporating their ability to better manage somatic comorbidities and reduce treatment resistance.
- Analysis of care pathways for patients with disorders targeted by the PEPR PROPSY, as well as the study of different models of care organization (coordinated pathways, expert centers, early intervention programs, digital tools), in order to assess their efficiency and, where applicable, estimate their return on investment.

Challenges for PEPR PROPSY

The aims of this chair for the PEPR PROPSY are to:

- Quantify the economic burden of the disorders targeted by the program and their somatic comorbidities, taking into account treatment resistance.
- Provide robust evidence on the clinical and economic value of precision psychiatry approaches (diagnostic and/or therapeutic) supported by the PEPR PROPSY, in order to facilitate their recognition and implementation.
- Support program teams and mental health decision-makers by providing health economic analyses, impact scenarios, and operational recommendations on resource allocation, the dissemination of innovations, and the reduction of inequalities in access to care.

Required skills

The successful candidate will have access to the PEPR PROPSY databases, which can be linked to the French National Health Data System (SNDS) and other national and international data sources (cohorts, registries, organizational innovation initiatives), in order to conduct large-scale health economic analyses.

This chair is primarily intended for French or international candidates with an interest in psychiatry who hold a Ph.D. in a field relevant to health economic evaluation, particularly in health economics, public health, epidemiology, biostatistics, or data science applied to health data.

2.1. Eligibility

The **eligibility criteria** are as follows:

- Experience criteria: Open to any early-career researcher, regardless of current position or nationality, who has defended a doctoral dissertation (science thesis) or an equivalent degree within the last 3 to 10 years.
- For maternity and paternity leave, the time requirement since the defense of the doctoral thesis may be extended by the documented number of days of leave taken for each child born before or after the completion of the doctoral degree, at the candidate's request. For extended sick leave, the time requirement since the defense of the doctoral thesis may be extended upon justification.
- The research project must be conducted in a **French host laboratory**. The host laboratory must be involved in the design of the research project, and the candidate must ensure that the host laboratory has all the equipment necessary for the proposal, in order to guarantee the best conditions for success.

2.2. Evaluation criteria

Junior Chairs of Excellence will be awarded based on:

- the candidate's scientific excellence,
- the quality and feasibility of the project,
- its alignment with the scientific priorities of the PEPR PROPSY,
- and the candidate's ability to engage the community around the relevant research areas

The following will be taken into particular consideration:

- The candidate's scientific background: significant publications, securing national or international private or public funding, participation in collaborative projects, scientific responsibilities (supervision, team leadership), invitations to conferences, awards and honors, etc.
- The ability to develop an original and ambitious project aligned with one of the three scientific areas of the call, and to establish an independent research program with a view to long-term sustainability in France.
- The project's alignment with the PEPR PROPSY's objectives in precision psychiatry (cohorts, biomarkers, AI, immunopsychiatry, health economics, etc.) and its potential contribution to leading and uniting working groups around the program's priority themes.
- The alignment between the project and the host environment: scientific quality of the laboratory, complementarity with local teams, access to necessary platforms and resources.
- Where applicable, the interdisciplinary nature of the project (integration of psychiatry, neuroscience, biology, AI, economics)

3.3 Selection process

The selection process will be divided into **two phases**:

- **Phase 1: Call for applications**
  - Applications must be submitted in English via the online platform: https://appels.programmesstrategiques.inserm.fr.
  - Applicants must present their project in a maximum of 3 pages (template available on the PEPR PROPSY website as well as on the online submission platform) according to the following outline:
    - Candidate expertise
    - Previous achievements
    - Project objectives
    - Description of the host laboratory, if identified at the time of application

- A CV following the template available on the PEPR PROPSY website and on the online submission platform (maximum 3 pages, listing a maximum of 5 to 10 publications, major conferences, and languages spoken)
- Projects will be evaluated based on scientific excellence and relevance, within the framework of one of the three scientific areas mentioned above.
- An estimated budget total is required, but the financial appendix is only expected for phase 2.

Candidates will be shortlisted by the program's scientific directors and approved by the PROPSY Executive Committee; only shortlisted candidates may proceed to Phase 2.

Suggestions for partnerships with PROPSY project partner laboratories may be made between Phase 1 and Phase 2.

- **Phase 2: Call for Proposals**
  - Applications must be submitted in English via the online platform: https://appels.programmesstrategiques.inserm.fr/
  - Applicants must submit a complete scientific proposal in the form of a project dossier, following the template provided on the project submission platform.
  - A detailed financial appendix must be completed and uploaded using the template on the platform.
  - A letter of support from the host institution
  - One or more letters of recommendation (optional)
  - Applicants will then be invited to present their research and community engagement program orally (in English) during a 15-minute presentation, either in person or via videoconference.
  - Projects will be evaluated by the PROPSY program's scientific leadership, supported by a committee of international experts.

3.4 Funding terms and project duration

Junior Chairs of Excellence will run for a maximum of **36 to 48 months**, with an annual evaluation of the project's progress.

Each chair will receive a maximum budget of **500 000€**, including up to 18% in administrative costs.

The budget may be used to:

- Fund the salary of the principal investigator and their team
- Funding operating costs directly associated with the research project

The host laboratory must provide the selected candidate with adequate and sufficient space to accommodate an emerging team, as well as access to local technology platforms.

Any co-funding must be indicated and will be viewed favorably.

3.5 Commitments of the Awardees

Publications and Dissemination
The research outcomes from the funded theses must be published in open access, in accordance with the open science policies of the PEPR PROPSY (cf. 4.4).

Participation in PEPR PROPSY Activities
Doctoral candidates are required to participate in seminars, training sessions, and events organized within the framework of the program.

Priority for PROPSY-EDU Actions
Awardees will receive priority access to the actions established under the PROPSY-EDU program, dedicated to training and career development in precision psychiatry (PROPSY-EDU).

Project Monitoring
Awardees and their managing institution must submit an annual report detailing the progress of the work, the results achieved, and the use of the allocated funding.

3.6 Open science

As part of the ANR's contribution to promoting and implementing open science, and in connection with the French National Open Science Plan (PNSO) and Plan S at the international level, recipients of the France 2030 grant commit to ensuring immediate open access to peer-reviewed scientific publications and adopting a FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable) approach for research data, in line with the principle of "as open as possible, as closed as necessary." Therefore, all scientific publications resulting from projects funded under the PEPR will be made available in open access under the Creative Commons CC-BY license or an equivalent license, using one of the following three routes:

- Publication in a journal that is natively open access.
- Publication in a subscription-based journal that is part of a transforming agreement or transformative journal.[1]
- Publication in a subscription-based journal. The publisher's version or the accepted manuscript for publication will be deposited in the open archive HAL by the authors under a CC-BY license, in line with the Strategy of Non-Transfer

[1] Definition of a transformative agreement or transformative journal: https://www.coalition-s.org/faq-theme/publication-fees-costs-prices-business-models/

of Rights (SNCD), as specified in the conditions of the funding decision or contract.

Moreover, the coordinating institution commits to ensuring that the full text of these scientific publications (accepted version or publisher's version) is deposited in the national open archive HAL, at the latest at the time of publication, and to referencing the ANR project number from which they originate.

The ANR encourages the deposit of preprints in open platforms or open archives and recommends using persistent or unique identifiers (such as DOI or HAL Id). Additionally, the ANR recommends prioritizing publication in journals or books that are natively open access.[2]

Finally, the coordinating institution commits to submitting a first version of the Data Management Plan (DMP) within 6 months of the program's start, as outlined in the grant agreement.

3) Application procedure

Proposals must be written and submitted in **English**.

No additional documents will be accepted after the closure of the call for applications, the date and time of which are specified on page 3.

The submission package must be submitted to the website specified on page 3. The templates for the CV and financial documents are available on the webpage of this call for applications.

The financial appendix must be submitted in an **Excel format**.

Any application that does not comply with the submission guidelines will be considered ineligible and will not be evaluated.

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Grants administrator: Eugénie Favelier

[2] The DOAJ website lists scientific journals that provide peer-reviewed articles and are freely accessible. Similarly, the DOAB website does the same for monographs.