



## MULTIROUND CALL 2025 – 2027 ROUND II

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### GUIDELINES FOR COMMITTEE MEMBERS

#### Aim of the Call

The present Call supports research projects focusing on rare diseases of proven genetic origin, of either monogenic or polygenic forms. The Multiround Call aims at funding basic and pre-clinical research projects focused on rare genetic diseases. Research projects can be submitted to one of the following tracks:

- **Track BASIC RESEARCH**

Focused on the identification of molecular and disease mechanism/s and/or identification and validation of disease target/s.

- **Track PRECLINICAL PROOF OF CONCEPT**

Focused on the identification and validation of therapeutic candidate/s once the disease target has been validated and/or the therapeutic strategy identified.

#### Committee Members' Role

Fondazione Telethon (FT) Scientific Committee members (Committee Members) will support the evaluation process by providing written comments and a score for each eligible Application.

#### General Instructions

The Applications and the Evaluation Form are available on the *Fondazione Telethon Grant Management* system portal at this [link](#), accessible through personal login and password.

For questions concerning access to the *Fondazione Telethon Grant Management*, the Reviewer is kindly asked to contact our IT Admin ([telethonscience@fondazionetelethon.it](mailto:telethonscience@fondazionetelethon.it)).

#### Reviewer Account

##### *Registered Users in TETRA (the former Grant Management system)*

Internal Reviewers already registered in TETRA – the former Fondazione Telethon Grant Management system – are **kindly asked NOT to create a new account**.

Please click on **Forgot Password?** and follow the given instructions for setting a New Password, then enter the portal.

##### *New Reviewer to Fondazione Telethon Calls*

To register and review the Applications, Reviewers should click on the **Register Here** button and enter their email address. To complete the registration process, follow the online instructions.

## Peer Review Process

### Triage Phase

The Triage Phase is the first phase of the Review process. It is used to identify top-ranking projects among eligible Application for full evaluation. During this phase, each Application is assigned to three Committee Members who are given access ONLY to the “Overall Description of the Research Projects”, the “General Information” and Biosketch sections. Committee Members assess scientific merit and assign scores accordingly.

Top-ranked Applications advance to Full Review Phase.

#### *Triage Instructions*

Committee Members are requested to access the *Fondazione Telethon Grant Management* system portal at this [link](#) through personal login and password. If you experience any issues accessing or downloading the Application from the Fondazione Telethon website, please consider using a different browser or enabling pop-ups. By clicking on **Pending Triage**, the Committee Members will find the list of all the Applications assigned to them and access each Application’s evaluation form by clicking on the specific project. For each project, the Committee Members will have access ONLY to the “Overall Description of the Research Projects” section, the “General Information” and Biosketch sections. These sections will be visible by clicking on the **View/Print** button next to **Application Preview**.

According to the Triage Scoring Scale reported below, Committee Members will select one of three score ranges and then will manually enter a numerical score in the **Triage Score** section of the form. The score should reflect the reviewer’s recommendation on whether the project should advance to full review. If the reviewer selects a score range of 1.0 – 3.5 or 3.6 – 4.5 they must also indicate the project’s **Weaknesses** (multiple selections are allowed).

Weaknesses are categorized as follows:

- not hypothesis-driven
- inappropriate design and methods
- not feasible
- weak preliminary studies
- poor rationale
- weak genetic link
- other (please specify in the comments)

Committee Members are also asked to fill in the **Comments on Weaknesses** section (max 3,000 characters). In the **Comments on Weaknesses** section, we kindly request each Committee Member to provide a few sentences to highlight any issues regarding the project. **Please note that Committee Members’ comments may be used to provide the Applicants with a written overall justification** if their proposal is excluded during the Triage Phase.

When all parts of the evaluation form have been completed, the Committee Members will click on **Submit** and the Application will be listed in the **Submitted Reviews** tab on the Home Page.

Triage Scoring Scale		
Triage Score	Project Evaluation	Recommendation
4.6 – 5.0	Outstanding	No concerns, suggested for full review
3.6 – 4.5	Good to Excellent	Some concerns (please justify), could undergo full review
1.0 – 3.5	Poor to Average	Major concerns (please justify), not suggested for full review

## Full Review Phase

Applications that **pass the Triage Phase** will advance to the **Full Review Phase** and will be evaluated by three Committee Members.

In support of their evaluation, Committee Members will be provided with written comments from two appropriate international External Reviewers, selected *ad hoc* for each Application by FT Scientific Officers.

During this remote phase, both the *Primary* and *Secondary Reviewers* have to provide written comments, while the *Tertiary Reviewer* has to provide an overall statement. All reviewers are required to assign a score that corresponds to their written remarks.

Written comments are an essential part of the review and are critical in developing summary statements for the Applicants.

Individual comments will be incorporated anonymously into a consolidated Review Report that will be returned to the Applicant. Reviewers should therefore ensure that their comments are accurate, clearly written, and free of derogatory language.

Please note: External Reviewers' written comments will also be included as such in the Review Report.

### *Remote evaluation Instructions*

Three Committee members will review each assigned Application, and each reviewer will provide a score.

Committee members are requested to access the *Fondazione Telethon Grant Management* system portal at this [link](#) through their personal login and password. If you experience any issues accessing or downloading the Application from the Fondazione Telethon portal, please consider using a different browser or enabling pop-ups.

By clicking on **Pending Panel Review**, the Committee Members will find the list of all Applications assigned for review and can access each proposal's evaluation form by clicking on the specific project. The Committee Members will find general information about the project in the Review tab, and the full proposal will be visible by clicking **Actions**, then **View Application in Split Screen**, or by clicking the **View/Print** button next to **Application Preview**.

Committee Members will be asked to evaluate and score each proposal based on the following criteria:

- Scientific rationale and unmet medical need
- Background and preliminary data
- Design and methods
- Project feasibility
- PI and team competence
- Budget

Committee Members are asked to fill in the **Project quality and feasibility** section in the evaluation form as explained below:

- **Significance** (max 3,500 characters) – Is the link to rare genetic diseases properly addressed? Is the proposed research original and/or innovative? Does the proposal present a clear rationale? Will the study address an important knowledge gap or unmet medical need for the disease? If successful, will it advance therapeutic development?
- **Approach and feasibility** (max 3,500 characters) – Do the preliminary results support the hypothesis or principles to be tested? Are the experimental approaches/methods appropriate to achieve the projects aims? Is the project feasible and achievable within the proposed timeframe? Is the budget justified and appropriate? Does the applicant identify potential pitfalls and propose reasonable alternative strategies? For preclinical projects, is there a practical pathway to translation? Please highlight overall strengths and weaknesses.

- **PI and team competence** (max 3,500 characters) - Are the PI and Team well qualified and appropriately suited to carry out the proposed work? Is the scope of the project proportionate to the experience of the PI and key personnel (including partners and collaborators)? Does the Team have a demonstrated track record or recognized expertise relevant to the project's field?

### Scores

Score range: from **1.0 (poor)** to **5.0 (outstanding)** by 0.1-unit increments.

Full Review Scoring Scale		
Score	Value	Description
4.6 – 5.0	Outstanding	Exceptionally strong with essentially no weaknesses
4.0 - 4.5	Excellent	Very strong with only minor weaknesses
3.6 - 3.9	Good	Strong but with at least one moderate weakness
2.0 – 3.5	Average	Some strengths but also some major weaknesses
1.0 - 1.9	Poor	A few strengths and numerous major weaknesses

**Definitions:**

**Minor:** an easily addressable weakness that does not substantially reduce the project's value

**Moderate:** A weakness that reduces the project's value

**Major:** A weakness that severely limits the project's value

When all parts of the evaluation form have been completed, the Committee Members will click on **Submit** and the Application will then be listed in the **Submitted Reviews** tab on the Home Page.

### Study Section

Based on the Panel Reviewers' written evaluation and scores, top-ranking projects will be discussed during a plenary meeting, chaired by two of the Committee Members.

Each project will be introduced by the *Primary Reviewer*, who will briefly describe the project and illustrate strengths and weaknesses. The *Secondary* and *Tertiary Reviewers* will also provide their statements. A discussion among all the Committee Members will take place before reviewers confirm their final scores. Based on these outcomes, the final list of research projects recommended for funding will be compiled.