



## MULTIROUND CALL 2025-2027 – ROUND II

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### GUIDELINES FOR EXTERNAL REVIEWERS

#### 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.

#### External Reviewer's Role

External reviewers will support Fondazione Telethon (FT) Scientific Committee members in the evaluation process by providing written comments and an overall recommendation for each eligible Application in the Full Review phase.

#### 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)*

External 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, External 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

### Full Review Phase

The present Call is a two-step process, a **Triage Phase**, based on the evaluation of the “Overall Description of the Research Project” section from the Application and performed by three FT Scientific Committee members only, and a Full Review Phase for all Applications that have passed the Triage Phase.

Applications that **pass the Triage Phase** will advance to the **Full Review Phase** and will be evaluated by three Committee Members, with the support of two international External Reviewers selected *ad hoc* for each Application by FT Scientific Officers.

External Reviewers are asked to provide written comments and an overall recommendation for each proposal. 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.

### Full Review Instructions

External Reviewers 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 Peer Review**, the External Reviewers will find their assigned Application and can access the evaluation form by clicking on the specific project. The External Reviewers 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**.

For each Application, External Reviewers will be asked to evaluate and provide an overall recommendation 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?

### *Overall Recommendation*

Based on the specific points raised in the written critique, the External Reviewers are asked to choose their recommendation as follows:

- A** - Outstanding; Exceptionally strong with essentially no weaknesses.
- B** - Excellent; Very strong with only minor weaknesses.
- C** - Good; Strong but with at least one moderate weakness.
- D** - Average; Some strengths but also some major weaknesses.
- E** - 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 External Reviewers will click on **Submit** and the Application will then be listed in the **Submitted Reviews** tab on the Home Page.