



FALL SEED GRANT 2026 CBLC CALL

GUIDELINES FOR REVIEWERS

Aim of the Call

Fall Seed Grant 2026 CBLC Call initiative supports research seed projects focused on **Methylmalonic acidemia with homocystinuria, type cbLC**. This Call is in support of research seed projects focusing only and exclusively on **Methylmalonic acidemia with homocystinuria, type cbLC (ORPHA:79282)** to investigate new hypotheses and understand the molecular and pathophysiological mechanisms underlying Methylmalonic acidemia with homocystinuria, type cbLC, and pave the way toward the development of new therapeutic strategies. Projects aimed at elucidating the pathogenic mechanisms underlying ocular manifestations in early-onset cbLC deficiency, particularly those involving the generation of retinal monolayers and/or ocular organoids as disease models to investigate visual deterioration, are highly encouraged.

- The following types of research projects are **NOT eligible** under this Call:
 - Epidemiological studies
 - Registries
 - Biobanks
 - Metabolomic studies
 - Studies focused on understanding the mechanism of already existing pharmacological treatments
- **Preliminary results are not required** provided that the underlying rationale and objectives are sound, plausible and testable.
- **The research proposal must focus on a well-defined goal achievable within the 18-month timeframe.**

Reviewers' Role

Reviewers support the evaluation process by assessing the scientific merit of the assigned Applications and providing written comments together with a score for each eligible proposal assigned for review.

General Instructions

The Applications and the Evaluation Form are available on the [Fondazione Telethon Grant Management System](#), accessible via personal login credentials.

For questions related to the *Fondazione Telethon Grant Management System*, Reviewers are kindly requested to contact the IT Admin at telethonscience@fondazionetelethon.it.

Reviewer Account

Registered Users in TETRA (the former Grant Management system)

Reviewers who registered in TETRA, the former Fondazione Telethon Grant Management system, **must NOT create a new account**. They should access the new portal by using the same email address previously used for TETRA.

Please enter the portal at this [link](#), click on **Forgot Password?** (below the **Login** button) and follow the instructions to set a new password. Please note that the system allows the creation of **only one account per email address**. If the email address used for registration is no longer valid, the applicant should contact our IT Admin at telethonscience@fondazionetelethon.it to update it.

New Reviewer to Fondazione Telethon Calls

New applicants should access the portal at this [link](#), click on *Register Here* and complete the registration process following the online instructions.

Review Process

The Review process for the Seed Grant Call entails three consecutive phases:

1. Fondazione Telethon ETS (FT) first verifies that all submitted Applications are eligible based on administrative criteria and scientific relevance to the Call. FT also selects an *ad hoc* panel of expert reviewers.
2. Reviewers remotely evaluate the scientific merit of the eligible Applications and provide written comments and a score.
3. The evaluation process ends with a final discussion during an online study section.

Remote Evaluation Instructions

Reviewers are requested to access the Fondazione Telethon Grant Management system using their personal login credentials at this [link](#). By clicking on **Pending Panel Review**, Reviewers will find the list of Applications assigned for their review and can access the corresponding Evaluation Form by clicking on the relevant project. General project information is available in the **Review** tab. The whole proposal can be viewed either

by clicking on **Actions**, then **View Application in Split Screen**, or by clicking **View/Print** next to **Application Preview** (please allow a few moments for the PDF file to load). If you experience difficulties accessing or downloading the Application, please try using different browsers or enabling pop-ups.

Written Comments

Written comments are a fundamental component of the review process and play a critical role in preparing the summary feedback statements provided to the Applicants.

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

In the Evaluation Form, Reviewers are required to **provide a summary statement outlining the main reasons supporting their recommendation** (max 3,000 characters), based on the evaluation criteria described below. Additional comments may be provided at the Reviewer's discretion.

Evaluation criteria:

A) Scientific Merit - Evaluate the overall scientific merit of the proposal by assessing its strengths and weaknesses according to the following parameters:

- **Significance** - Is the link to the rare genetic disease properly addressed? Does this study address an important problem? What will the effect of these studies be on the concepts or methods that drive this field?
- **Originality of Science** - Does the project employ novel concepts, approaches, or methods? Are the aims original and innovative? Does the project challenge existing paradigms or develop new methodologies or technologies?
- **Appropriateness of Design and Methods** - Are the conceptual framework, design, methods, and analyses adequately developed, well-integrated, and appropriate to the aims of the project? Are preliminary results (if available) adequately supporting the hypothesis to be tested? **Please note that preliminary data are not mandatory.**
- **Feasibility and Safety** - Is the project feasible in the 18-month timeframe? Does the Applicant acknowledge potential problem areas and consider alternative plans? Please evaluate the adequacy of the proposed protection for the humans, the animals, or the environment (if any), to the extent they may be adversely affected by the project proposed in the Application.
- **PI and Team Competence** - Is the applicant appropriately trained and well-suited to carry out this work? Is the proposed work proportionate to the applicant's experience?
- **Budget** - Is the budget appropriate for the proposed research? **Of Note:** A maximum of **€ 75,000** for 18-month projects is allowed.

B) Potential Impact:

- **Added Value** - If successful, how will the project advance scientific knowledge in the field?
- **Unmet Need** - How will the project address existing unmet need(s) for patients with rare genetic diseases?

Score

Reviewers are asked to assign a score that reflects the written evaluation, using the scale below. Scores range from **1.0 (poor)** to **5.0 (outstanding)** and may be assigned in increments of 0.1.

Score range	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 weakness: an easily addressable weakness that does not substantially reduce the project's value

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

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

Once the evaluation is completed, Reviewers may submit their review by clicking **Submit**. Submitted reviews remain accessible from the Homepage, under the **My Reviews** tab.

Study section

Based on the Reviewers' written evaluation and preliminary scores, Applications will be discussed during an online plenary meeting chaired by one of the Reviewers.

Each project will be introduced by one Reviewer, who will provide a brief overview of the project and summarize its major strengths and weaknesses. Other Reviewers will also contribute with their perspectives before a general discussion takes place and final individual scores are restated.

Projects receiving a final score within the **Excellent** or **Outstanding** range will be recommended for funding.

Milan - October 14th, 2026

FONDAZIONE TELETHON ETS