Longfonds Junior Investigator Grants 2026
including the
CPBT Grant 2026

Procedure & Terminology for Applicants

This document is valid until 31 December 2026.

Procedure for applicants of the Junior Investigator Grants, incl. CPBT Grant

1. **Submission of Pre-Application**
   The Junior Investigator Grant round begins with the submission of a Pre-Application form, also referred to as a Declaration of Intent.
   In this document, applicants provide a concise description of their research proposal, including the timeline and budget. The Pre-Application should comply with the criteria as outlined in the document *Requirements of the Longfonds Junior Investigator Grant* or the *Requirements of the Longfonds CPBT Investigator Grant*.

2. **Eligibility review**
   Longfonds will evaluate whether the submitted Pre-Application is consistent with the objectives, themes, and eligibility criteria set forth in the relevant *Requirements* document. Pre-Applications that meet these criteria will be forwarded to the scientific reviewers for comprehensive evaluation.

3. **Evaluation of Pre-Application**
   During this phase, the Pre-Application will be reviewed by the Scientific Advisory Committee (WAR). Applicants are not required to take any action at this stage.
   The evaluation consists of the following aspects:

- **Scientific quality**: Two independent scientific reviewers will assess the clarity of the research question, originality, quality of the research plan, methodology, feasibility within the proposed timeframe, and justification of the budget;
- **Applicant's qualifications**: The reviewers will evaluate the applicant's experience, publication record (both academic and public), collaborative skills, and overall suitability for the proposed research;
- **Societal and patient relevance**: The reviewers will assess the potential impact of the research on society and patients, including expected benefits such as improved prevention, faster diagnostics, cost reductions, or increased workforce participation;
- **Research theme alignment**: The reviewers will determine whether the Pre-Application aligns with the selected research theme. If the proposed referees are considered unsuitable, Longfonds will contact the applicant;
- **Patient involvement**: The reviewers will evaluate whether the research demonstrates meaningful engagement with people living with lung diseases.

The reviewers' assessments will be submitted to the Scientific Advisory Committee (WAR) and Longfonds in advance of the Pre-Application meeting.
The LED representatives (MAR) will not participate in the Pre-Application meeting.

4. Pre-Application meeting and review process

During the Pre-Application meeting, the Scientific Advisory Committee (WAR) will discuss all submitted proposals. The WAR consists of members with a scientific and/or clinical background in pulmonology and an independent chair. Longfonds ensures minimal conflicts of interest within the committee.

During the meeting:

- Scientific rapporteurs will lead the discussion on scientific quality, patient involvement, and societal relevance;
- Committee members will participate in the discussion and provide individual scores using a six-point scale (1 = insufficient, 6 = excellent);
- Scientific reviewers and clinical experts will assign scores for both scientific quality and societal and patient relevance;
- The chair will ensure proper time management and maintain procedural integrity.

5. Prioritization and decision-making

Applicants are not required to take any action during this stage. Longfonds will prioritize proposals based on the cumulative scores assigned by the WAR members. The total score for scientific quality and the total score for relevance (an average of patient and societal relevance scores) will be calculated.

Longfonds sets a minimum threshold of 4.0 for both scientific quality and relevance. The overall acceptance rate is maintained at approximately 20%, based on prioritization.

6. Outcome of the Pre-Application meeting

If both scientific quality and relevance scores exceed 4.0, the applicant will be invited to submit a full Grant Application.

If either score falls below 4.0, the application will unfortunately be declined.

7. Submission of Grant Application

In the event of a positive outcome, Longfonds will send you a form that allows you to submit a detailed Grant Application.

As part of our newly introduced procedure, applicants invited to submit a full proposal will be required to participate in an advisory meeting (‘Adviesgesprek’) with the LED group (LED = Longfonds’ Patient Experts). This discussion aims to further refine the proposal, address any concerns raised during the review process, and ensure meaningful patient involvement and societal relevance in the project.

This revised procedure introduces a more structured feedback process and strengthens patient participation through direct advisory discussions between applicants and the LED group.

8. Evaluation of Grant Application

At this stage, no action is required from you. Once we have received the Grant Application, it will be

forwarded to international referees. These referees will have been pre-selected by you and reviewed by Longfonds and the WAR. Longfonds aims to have 2-3 referees provide an evaluation.
The referees will describe their feedback in a hearing document. They will assess the originality and clarity of the research aim, the research protocol, feasibility, the applicant's qualifications, and the budget. Longfonds ensures that the referees substantiate their evaluations. The scientific rapporteurs will review the substantive adequacy of the referee assessments.

Additionally, the Grant Application will be forwarded to Longfonds' Patient Experts (LED). They will evaluate the application following a similar procedure and with the same criteria as during the Pre-Application stage.

9. Rebuttal

Longfonds will then send you the evaluation report from the referees and the feedback from the Longfonds Patient Experts. We request that you provide a rebuttal in response to the feedback from both the referees and the Longfonds' Patient Experts and return this to Longfonds. This rebuttal will also be forwarded to the Longfonds Patient Expert groups for their feedback.

10. Final evaluation of Grant Application

At this stage, no action is required from you. The scientific rapporteurs will provide a final evaluation of the Grant Application and an explanation of their reasoning. Their assessment will be based on the following:

- The Grant Application;
- The comments from the Scientific Advisory Committee (including the Longfonds' Patient Experts) following the Pre-Application meeting;
- The evaluations from the international referees in the hearing document;
- The rebuttal you have submitted.

A rapporteur may diverge from the quality assessment of the referees. For example, they may arrive at a different conclusion after reading the rebuttal. The rapporteur may also weigh certain arguments differently or give more weight to one referee's opinion if there is a difference between referees. If a rapporteur deviates, Longfonds will ask them to provide a clear rationale. The rapporteur may not introduce entirely new substantive arguments that were not previously mentioned by the referees.

Additionally, the rapporteurs will assess the societal relevance. They will consider the societal importance of the research, such as better prevention, faster diagnostics, lower costs, or increased workforce participation. Based on this, an average final score will be assigned for societal relevance.

11. Final Meeting and evaluation process

During the final meeting of the Scientific Advisory Committee (WAR) and Societal Advisory Committee (MAR), you will have the opportunity to present and defend your research proposal. Ideally, you will present in Dutch.

After your presentation, there will be a discussion with members of the WAR and the MAR. They will ask you questions about your research proposal, often based on the comments made by the referees

and Longfonds' Patient Experts in their written evaluations. The rapporteurs will guide the discussion on scientific aspects, while the Longfonds Patient Experts will focus on patient participation and societal relevance. The other members of the WAR and MAR will also participate in the discussion. The chair will manage the time and procedure.

After the discussion, you will be asked to leave the room. The WAR and the MAR will then continue to discuss the quality and relevance of your application. Each committee member will assign scores on a scale from 1 (insufficient) to 6 (excellent), which will be done anonymously via a voting ballot.

The rapporteurs and other scientists/clinicians will assign two scores: one for quality and one for societal relevance. The Longfonds' Patient Experts will also assign two scores: one for patient relevance and one for societal relevance. Their scores are based not only on their own judgment but also on the evaluations previously formulated by the group of Patient Experts.

12. Prioritization and decision-making of Grant Applications

At this stage, no action is required from you. Longfonds will determine the prioritization based on the scores given by the Scientific Advisory Committee in the final meeting. A total score for quality will be calculated, as well as a total score for relevance. The total relevance score will be the average of the societal and patient relevance scores.
Longfonds will then compare the applications using a prioritization matrix. The scientific quality and relevance will determine where the research fits in the matrix. Longfonds will only award funding to proposals of very high quality, meaning both quality and relevance must score higher than 5.

The goal in 2026 is to award three grants, one of which will be the CPBT Grant.
If multiple applications score higher than 5 in both quality and relevance, the proposal with the highest score for relevance will be selected.
The prioritized applications will then be submitted to the Longfonds board. The final decision-making rests with the board of Longfonds, and their decision is binding.

13. Award or rejection of your application

After the final meeting, you will promptly be notified whether a grant will be awarded to your research proposal. You will also receive feedback from the rapporteurs, referees, and Longfonds' Patient Experts, along with a summary of the discussion that took place during the final meeting. The final grant award will be made subject to the terms and conditions included in the award letter.

General Terminology for Applicants

A. Declaration of Intent
The Declaration of Intent is the Pre-Application form. A grant application with Longfonds begins by filling out this form. We ask that you prepare the form in English due to the evaluation by international referees. Additionally, we ask you to provide a Dutch summary for the public, which will be reviewed by the Longfonds' Patient Experts.

B. Rapporteurs
Three members of the Scientific Advisory Committee (WAR) are appointed as rapporteurs for each application. Rapporteurs always have a relevant scientific background. They evaluate the Pre-Application for quality and relevance. For their final judgment, they also base their assessment on the comments from the Scientific Advisory Committee (WAR), the anonymized evaluations from the referees, and the rebuttal you have submitted. During both the Pre-Application and final meetings, the rapporteurs lead the substantive discussion. Longfonds ensures that the rapporteurs have no conflict of interest with the project or any competing projects.

C. Longfonds' Patient Experts (LED)
Longfonds' Patient Experts (LED) are part of the Maatschappelijke Adviesraad (Societal Advisory Committee, MAR). A Patient Expert is a patient who reflects on their own experiences, integrates others' experiences, can think beyond the disease, and has the skills to communicate this effectively. These experts are carefully selected by Longfonds and trained to evaluate scientific research funding applications. Since they have a unique understanding of the questions and needs that are relevant to lung patients, Longfonds highly values their involvement in evaluating research funding.
The Patient Experts evaluate both Pre-Applications and detailed applications in groups. During the final meetings, they are present to discuss the societal and patient relevance with you. Their evaluation is based not only on their own insights but also on the assessments previously made by groups of Patient Experts.

D. Scientific Advisory Committee (WAR)
The Scientific Advisory Committee (WAR) of Longfonds evaluates research proposals for scientific quality and relevance. The committee consists of members with scientific and/or clinical backgrounds in pulmonology, and an independent chair, preferably from outside the pulmonology field. The WAR evaluates the scientific quality and relevance of the research proposals exclusively during the Pre-Application meeting.

E. Conflict of interest
To prevent conflicts of interest as much as possible, Longfonds asks the rapporteurs and other scientists/clinicians to complete a conflict-of-interest form before the meeting, inquiring whether they are involved in the application or research group. Longfonds Patient Experts disclose any conflicts of interest as soon as they receive the applications (before the meeting). If a committee member has a conflict of interest, they will be asked to leave the room when the relevant research is

presented. They will not assign a score. Committee members who work in the same research institute as the applicants but are not directly involved in the research group are not required to leave the room, ensuring sufficient expertise remains for the discussion. We ask these members to assess whether they can remain objective when assigning scores.

F. Grant Application
The Grant Application is the detailed application. If your Pre-Application receives sufficient scores for quality and relevance, you will be invited to submit this detailed application. Longfonds will send you the necessary form.

G. Referees
Referees are international researchers with appropriate expertise who have no involvement with your application or research group. There should be no joint publications or research projects with them in the past two years. Longfonds asks you to nominate at least seven referees when submitting your Pre-Application. Longfonds and the rapporteurs then check the referees for conflicts of interest and suitability. At least three referees will provide a written evaluation of your Grant Application. Longfonds anonymizes the evaluations and sends them to the rapporteurs. The rapporteurs base their evaluation of the Grant Application on these referee assessments.

H. Chair
The independent chair leads both the Pre-Application and final meetings procedurally. The rapporteurs lead the substantive discussion. The chair will open the final meeting summary with the Scientific Advisory Committee (WAR), highlighting three positive aspects and three areas for improvement. These points will be shared with you after the meeting.