# Procedure & terms for applicants

## LONGFONDS Consortium Grant 2027

The LONGFONDS Consortium Grant Program is aimed at building successful consortiums to perform innovative scientific lung research and have an impact on societal utilization.

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## Pre-application

**1. Submission of a pre-application**

The consortium grant round starts with the submission of a pre-application, also referred to as a Declaration of Intent. In this document, you briefly describe your research proposal, including the planning and budget.

**2. Eligibility check**

At this stage, Longfonds verifies whether your pre-application fits within the Longfonds research agenda and meets the eligibility requirements. This research agenda and the requirements are described in the document 'Requirements Longfonds Consortium Grant'.
If your application meets the requirements, Longfonds forwards your pre-application to the rapporteurs.

**3. Assessment of the pre-application**

In this stage, two rapporteurs assess your pre-application. As an applicant, you do not need to take any action during this stage.
For each application, the rapporteurs provide a written assessment of the:

- Scientific quality, including: clarity of the research question, originality, quality of the work plan and methodology, the extent to which the methodology supports answering the research question, feasibility in terms of project duration, and the budget. The rapporteurs also provide a summary of strengths and weaknesses (for applicant feedback).
- Quality of the consortium, including: the quality of the consortium partners and the added value of the consortium.
- Societal relevance: what is the societal importance of this research? For example: improved prevention or faster diagnostics, lower costs, or increased participation in the labour market.

The rapporteurs also verify whether your pre-application falls within the research theme you specified. In addition, they check whether the scientific reviewers you proposed are suitable. If not, and too few suitable reviewers remain, Longfonds office will contact you.
The rapporteurs submit their written assessment to the Scientific Advisory Committee (Wetenschappelijke Advies Raad, also referred to as 'WAR') and to Longfonds prior to the pre-application meeting.

**4. Pre-application meeting and assessment system**

During the pre-application meeting, the Scientific Advisory Committee (WAR) discusses the pre-applications. The committee is carefully assembled by Longfonds and consists of members with a scientific and/or clinical background in the respiratory field. The meeting is chaired by an independent chairperson. Longfonds aims to prevent conflicts of interest as much as possible.

The rapporteurs lead the substantive discussion during the pre-application meeting. The other members of the Scientific Advisory Committee (WAR) participate in the discussion. The chair monitors time and ensures the process runs smoothly.

All members of the Scientific Advisory Committee (WAR) read the applications in advance. During the meeting, they will discuss the quality and relevance of your application. Subsequently, each member assigns scores on a scale from 1 (insufficient) to 6 (excellent).

The rapporteurs and other scientists/clinicians provide two scores: one for quality and one for relevance.

**5. Prioritization and decision-making for pre-applications**

In this stage, you do not need to take any action. Longfonds determines prioritization based on the scores given by the members of the Scientific Advisory Committee (WAR) during the pre-application meeting. A total score for scientific quality is calculated, as well as a total score for relevance. Both scores are equally important for prioritization.

Depending on the number of grants available, a pre-determined maximum number of pre-applications will be invited to the next round. To enter the final round, a minimum total score is required for both scientific quality and relevance. Preparing a full pre-application takes a lot of the applicant's time, and Longfonds wants to ensure that the chance of funding remains at least 30%.

**6. Outcome of the pre-application meeting**

Whether or not you are selected for the final round, Longfonds will share the comments from the rapporteurs and the feedback from the pre-application meeting with you.

## Full application

**7. Invitation to develop a full grant application**

If the outcome of the pre-application meeting is positive, Longfonds will send you a form that enables you to submit a full grant application. During the period in which you develop your grant application, Longfonds will invite you and the other partners in your consortium to an online advisory meeting (60 minutes) with our Longfonds Patient Experts (LEDs).

**8. Online advisory meeting**

During this online advisory meeting, organized by Longfonds well before the deadline of the full application, you are invited to present your research proposal to a group of 3 to 4 Longfonds Patient Experts (LEDs) and receive advice on aspects that are important for patients in your research. During this meeting (max. 60 minutes) there will also be an opportunity to discuss the relevance for patients and society.
The online meeting is explicitly intended to provide advisory support for your research design. Input from the Longfonds Patient Experts can help you to further improve your full application

**9. Once the grant application has been submitted**

In this stage, you do not need to take any action. Once we have received the grant application, we forward it to international reviewers. These scientific reviewers were proposed by you in advance and checked by Longfonds and the rapporteurs. Longfonds aims to obtain assessments from at least two reviewers.
The reviewers describe their feedback in a review document. They assess the originality and clarity of the objective, the research protocol, feasibility, the quality of the consortium, and the budget. Longfonds ensures that their assessments are properly substantiated. The rapporteurs assess the substantive adequacy of the reviewers' assessments.
We also forward the grant application to our Longfonds Patient Experts (LEDs). They assess relevance to the patient and societal relevance. During their assessment, they distinguish between fundamental and clinical research by using different forms. As a group, the Longfonds Patient Experts (LEDs) assess the grant applications, among other things, on:

- Clarity of the lay summary;
- Relevance for the target group;
- Societal relevance;
- Risk for study participants;
- Burden for study participants;
- Feasibility of the research;
- Patient participation;
- Representativeness;
- Ethics;
- Communication;
- Implementation of research results.

**10. Right of reply/rebuttal**

Longfonds then sends you the reviewers' review document and the feedback from the Longfonds Patient Experts (LEDs). We ask you to write a response (right of reply) addressing the feedback from both the international reviewers and the Longfonds Patient Experts (LEDs), and to return it to Longfonds.

Please note: the members of the Societal Advisory Committee (MAR, a delegation of LED representatives) will also receive your written reply/rebuttal and will take it into account in their assessment during the final meeting.

**11. Final assessment of the grant application**

In this stage, you do not need to take any action. The rapporteurs provide a final assessment of the grant application and an explanation. They base their assessment on:

- Your grant application;
- The comments from the Scientific Advisory Committee (WAR) following the pre-application meeting;
- The assessments of the international reviewers in the review document;
- The assessments of the Longfonds Patients Experts (LEDs);
- Your written right of reply.

A rapporteur may deviate from the reviewers' judgement on quality. For example, they may come to a different conclusion after reading the right of reply. They may also weigh certain arguments differently, or, in case of differences between reviewers, allow the judgement of one reviewer to carry more weight. If a rapporteur deviates, Longfonds asks them to clearly justify why. A rapporteur may not introduce entirely new substantive arguments that were not mentioned by the reviewers in the quality assessment.

In addition, the rapporteurs provide an assessment of societal relevance, considering the societal importance of the research.

**12. Final meeting and assessment system**

During the final joint meeting of the Scientific Advisory Committee (WAR) and the Societal Advisory Committee (MAR), you will have the opportunity to present your research proposal orally, explain your choices, and answer questions from the committee. Per project, a maximum of three applicants per consortium is admitted. You also have the option to bring a patient or expert-by-experience who can explain the patient participation component (within the allotted time).
Your oral presentation (preferably in Dutch) may last a maximum of 5 minutes. You will have up to 15 minutes to answer questions. After the discussion, you will be asked to leave both the meeting and the building. The committee will further discuss and score your project proposal.
The members of the WAR provide two scores: one for scientific quality and one for societal relevance. The members of the MAR also provide two scores: one for patient relevance and one for societal relevance. The members of the MAR base their score not only on their own

insight, but primarily on the assessments previously formulated by the groups of Longfonds Patient Experts (LEDs).

**13. Prioritisation and decision-making for full applications**

In this stage, you do not need to take any action. Longfonds determines prioritization based on the scores given by the WAR and MAR during the final meeting. A total score for quality and a total score for relevance is calculated. The total relevance score is calculated as an average of the scores for societal relevance and patient relevance.

Longfonds then compares and weighs the applications using a prioritization matrix. Scientific quality and relevance determine into which category the research is placed. Longfonds will only award funding to proposals of both high quality and relevance.

The prioritized applications are submitted to the Longfonds Board. Final decision-making lies with the Longfonds Board, and this decision is binding.

**14. Approval or rejection of your application**

After the final meeting, you will soon receive notification from us as to whether or not funding will be granted for your research proposal. For the date on which the decision will be communicated to you, please refer to our website.
At a later stage, you will receive feedback from the rapporteurs, reviewers, and Longfonds Patient Experts (LEDs), as well as a summary of what was discussed during the final meeting. Final funding approval is granted subject to the funding conditions enclosed with the award letter.

## Explanation of terms and abbreviations used

**A. Declaration of intent**

The declaration of intent is the pre-application form. A funding application at Longfonds starts with completing this form. We ask you to prepare this form in English due to assessment by international reviewers. In addition, we ask you to write a Dutch lay summary. This will be read and assessed by the Longfonds Patient Experts (LEDs).

**B. Rapporteurs**

For each application, two members of the Scientific Advisory Committee (WAR) are appointed as rapporteurs to provide an assessment. Rapporteurs always have a relevant scientific background. They assess the pre-application on quality and relevance. For their final judgement, they also base their assessment on the comments of the Scientific Advisory Committee, the written and anonymized assessments of reviewers, and the right of reply prepared by you.

During the pre-application meeting and the final meeting, they lead the substantive discussion. Longfonds ensures that the rapporteurs are not involved in the project or in a strongly competing project.

**C. Longfonds Patient Experts (LEDs)**

A patient expert is a patient who reflects on personal experiences, supplements these with the experiences of others, can think beyond a single disease, and has the skills to communicate this effectively. These patient experts are carefully selected by Longfonds and trained to assess funding applications for scientific research. Because they understand better than anyone which questions and needs are relevant for people with lung disease, Longfonds highly values their involvement in the assessment of scientific research funding.

The Longfonds Patient Experts (LEDs) are not involved in the pre-application round, but they have an active advisory role during the development of the full application (see paragraph 8. 'Online Advisory Meeting').

During the final selection meeting, representatives of the LED groups are present to discuss societal relevance and patient relevance with you. They base their assessment not only on their own insights, but primarily on the evaluations previously formulated by the patient expert groups.

**D. Scientific Advisory Committee (Wetenschappelijke Advies Raad, WAR)**

The Scientific Advisory Committee of Longfonds assesses research proposals on scientific quality and relevance. The Scientific Advisory Committee consists of committee members with a scientific and/or clinical background in the respiratory field, Longfonds Patient Experts (LEDs), and an independent chair, preferably not from the respiratory field. The Longfonds Patient Experts (LEDs) are specifically selected based on suitability for the committee. The Scientific Advisory Committee meets twice: during the pre-application meeting and during the final meeting.

**E. Societal Advisory Committee (Maatschappelijke Advies Raad, MAR)**

The representatives from the LED groups participating in the Final Meeting together form the MAR. They represent the other Longfonds Patient Experts. During this meeting, they present the LED groups' assessment of the full applications.

**F. Conflict of interest**

To prevent conflicts of interest as much as possible, Longfonds asks the rapporteurs and other scientists/clinicians prior to the meeting, via an involvement form, whether they are in any way involved in the application or the research group.
Longfonds Patient Experts (LEDs) report any involvement as soon as they receive the applications (thus prior to the meeting).

If involvement applies to someone present, we will ask them to leave the meeting room once the relevant research is presented. They will therefore not assign a score. Committee members who work at the same research institute as the applicants of a proposal, but are not directly involved in the research group, do not have to leave the room. This ensures that

sufficient expertise remains present to conduct the discussion. We ask these members to assess for themselves whether they can cast an objective vote.

**G. Grant application**

The grant application is the full application. If your pre-application scores sufficiently on quality and relevance, you will be invited to submit this application.
Your full application must be submitted using the standard form that Longfonds will provide.

**H. Reviewers**

The reviewers are international scientists with relevant expertise who are not involved in your application and have no affiliation with your research group. No joint publications or research projects may have been conducted with these reviewers in the past five years. Longfonds asks you to propose at least seven reviewers when submitting your pre-application.
Longfonds and the rapporteurs check these reviewers for conflicts of interest and suitability of expertise. At least two reviewers provide a written assessment of your grant application.

**I. Chair**

The independent chair leads the pre-application meeting and the final meeting procedurally. Substantively, the discussion is led by the rapporteurs. The chair opens the debriefing with the Scientific Advisory Committee and summarizes the debriefing into three positive points and three points for improvement. Longfonds will share these points with your consortium after the meeting.