Grant selection procedure

LONGFONDS Consortium Grant on Lung Regeneration 2027

Bringing together leading researchers in a four-year consortium to accelerate the development of pharmacological interventions that stimulate or enhance the lung's natural repair mechanisms and promote the regeneration of damaged lung tissue.

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Declaration of intent

1. Submission of a declaration of intent

The consortium grant round starts with the submission of a declaration of intent, in which applicants briefly describe their research proposal, including the proposed planning and budget. The emphasis is on outlining the main elements of the proposal.

2. Eligibility check

At this stage, Longfonds verifies whether your declaration of intent meets the eligibility requirements, described in the document 'Requirements Longfonds Consortium Grant on Lung Regeneration'.
If your application meets the requirements, Longfonds forwards your declaration of intent to the members of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Lung Regeneration (hereafter referred to as SAC).

3. Assessment of the declaration of intent

Assessment by the Scientific Advisory Committee on Lung Regeneration (SAC)

As an applicant, you do not need to take any action during this stage.
The SAC assesses your declaration of intent based on its alignment with the objectives of this specific grant, scientific quality and feasibility, the quality and expertise of the consortium and the added value of the collaboration. The assessment considers the clarity of the research question, the feasibility of the proposed research within the project duration, the potential and relevance of the preclinical models, the pathway towards subsequent clinical development, the appropriateness of the methodology and budget, and the societal relevance and potential impact of the research.

The SAC verifies whether the international scientific reviewers you proposed are suitable. If not, and too few suitable reviewers remain, the Longfonds Research Team will contact you.
The SAC provides a summary of the proposal's strengths and weaknesses, which will be shared with applicants as feedback.

4. Declaration of intent meeting and assessment system

During the declaration of intent meeting, the SAC discusses the declarations of intent. The committee is carefully assembled by Longfonds and consists of members with a scientific and/or clinical background in the respiratory field, a valorization expert and one or more patient experts.
The meeting is chaired by an independent chairperson. Longfonds aims to prevent conflicts of interest as much as possible. All members of the Scientific Advisory Committee read the applications in advance. During the meeting, they will discuss the quality and relevance of your application.

5. Prioritization and decision-making for declarations of intent

As an applicant, you do not need to take any action during this stage. Longfonds determines prioritization based on the reviews and discussions given by the SAC during the declaration of

intent meeting. The scientific quality and the relevance are equally important for prioritization.

Preparing a full grant application takes a lot of the applicant's time, and Longfonds wants to ensure that the chance of funding remains at least 30%. Therefore, a pre-determined maximum number of applicants will be invited to the next round.

6. Outcome of the declaration of intent meeting

Whether or not you are selected for the final round, Longfonds will share the reviews and the comments from the declaration of intent meeting with you.

Full application

7. Invitation to develop a full grant application

If the outcome of the declaration of intent meeting is positive, Longfonds will send you a form that enables you to submit a full grant application.

8. 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 SAC. 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 members of the SAC assess the substantive adequacy of the reviewers' assessments and the full application.
The Longfonds Patient Experts in the SAC 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.

9. Right of reply/rebuttal

Longfonds then sends you the review documents of the international reviewers and the members of the SAC. We ask you to write a response (right of reply) addressing the feedback from both the international reviewers and the SAC and to return it to Longfonds.

10. Final assessment of the grant application

In this stage, you do not need to take any action. The SAC provides a final assessment of the grant application. They base their assessment on:

- Your grant application;
- The assessments of the international reviewers in the review document;
- Your written right of reply.

The SAC 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 the SAC deviates, Longfonds asks them to clearly justify why. The SAC may not introduce entirely new substantive arguments that were not mentioned by the reviewers in the quality assessment.

11. Final meeting and assessment system

During the final joint meeting of the SAC-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 evaluate your project proposal. The scientific quality and the relevance are equally important for prioritization.

12. Prioritization and decision-making for full applications

In this stage, you do not need to take any action. Longfonds determines prioritization based on the evaluation by the members of the SAC during the final meeting.

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

13. 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 the timeline published on our website.
At a later stage, you will receive feedback from the SAC, 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 declaration of intent 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.

B. Longfonds Patient Experts

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.

C. Scientific Advisory Committee on Lung Regeneration (SAC)

The Scientific Advisory Committee on Lung Regeneration assesses research proposals on scientific quality and relevance. This Committee, specifically established for this funding round, consists of committee members with a scientific and/or clinical background in the respiratory field, Longfonds Patient Experts, a valorization expert and an independent chair, preferably not from the respiratory field. The Longfonds Patient Experts are specifically selected based on suitability for the committee. The Scientific Advisory Committee meets twice: during the declaration of intent meeting and during the final meeting.

D. Conflict of interest

To prevent conflicts of interest as much as possible, Longfonds asks the SAC members 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 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. 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.

E. Grant application

The grant application is the full application. If your declaration of intent 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.

F. International 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 declaration of intent.
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.

G. Chair

The independent chair leads the declaration of intent meeting and the final meeting procedurally. The chair opens the debriefing with the Scientific Advisory Committee on Lung Regeneration and summarizes the debriefing into three positive points and three points for improvement. Longfonds will share these points with your consortium after the meeting.