

CALL 2026 · RULES

Strongers for Research 2026

Four €3,000 gross awards for young researchers and doctors working on lung cancer

Opens	**25/11/2026, 09:00**
Closes	**09/01/2027, 23:59**
Applications online only	**strongers.org/grant/2026**

Text version: 5d01dfe4d7e043fc. The Italian text published on the call page prevails.

1. About us

Strongers Social Club ETS, founded in 2023 and registered in the Italian Third Sector Register (RUNTS), promotes sport as a public health tool and as concrete support for scientific research on lung cancer. It brings together athletes, sports clubs, healthcare professionals and citizens to support research, prevention and quality of life for people with lung cancer, with particular attention to the growth of young researchers.

Through sports events and challenges, Strongers raises funds for competitive mini-grants for training and scientific dissemination (conferences, publications, specialist courses). In the 2024 and 2025 editions it funded 7 young researchers.

The Scientific Committee, an autonomous body provided for by the Statute and made up of three members from outside the Board, evaluates and selects projects independently against public criteria. At the annual Strongers Awards ceremony the organisation honours the winners and follows up their results.

2. The call

Introduction

Strongers Social Club ETS, registered office at via Ruggero Fiore 38, 00136 Rome, Italy, publishes the annual call «Strongers for Research 2026» (the «Call») to recognise excellence in Italian cancer research and support young talent working on lung cancer.

Purpose

The Call awards **4 (four)** young researchers, doctors or professors who have distinguished themselves through their contribution to lung cancer research during 2025/2026, in order to:

- advance knowledge and the development of new therapies for lung cancer;
- promote primary and secondary prevention of lung cancer;
- foster collaboration between researchers and the dissemination of scientific results;
- support the growth of young talent in oncology;
- help improve the quality of life of patients with lung cancer.

Award holders receive financial support for their professional growth in oncology, with a focus on lung cancer.

Research areas

The Call covers lung cancer research in one or more of the following areas:

- molecular mechanisms of lung carcinogenesis;
- new diagnostic and prognostic strategies;

- innovative therapies for advanced lung cancer;
- biomarkers and drug resistance;
- role of supportive care in lung cancer;
- lung cancer epidemiology and prevention;
- benefits of physical activity in cancer treatment.

3. Available funds

The funds available for the 2026 edition total **€12,000.00** (twelve thousand euros).

4. Who can apply

Requirements

The Call is open to researchers and doctors, academic or hospital-based, including PhD students and residents who already hold a PhD, MD or PharmD, working in healthcare or scientific research who, **on the date the Call is published (25/11/2026)**:

- are resident in Italy;
- are aged 40 or under, i.e. were born on or after **26/11/1985**;
- hold a research doctorate or equivalent (PhD, MD, PharmD are accepted);
- have shown, through publications, clinical activity or participation in research projects, a concrete commitment to improving the outlook and quality of life of patients with lung cancer;
- have no conflict of interest with Strongers Social Club ETS.

For the purposes of the Call, a **conflict of interest** exists for members of the Board of Strongers Social Club ETS or of the Scientific Committee, for their spouses, cohabiting partners and relatives or in-laws up to the second degree, and for employees or paid collaborators of Strongers Social Club ETS.

Each person may submit **one application only**. Until the deadline, applicants may withdraw it from the personal link in the confirmation email and submit a new one: the last application received and not withdrawn is the valid one. The link gives access to the application to anyone who opens it: applicants keep it safe and do not forward it. On withdrawal the application and its attachments are deleted straight away; only the reference number and the submission and withdrawal dates are kept, as set out in section 8. After the deadline the link can no longer be used to withdraw: applicants may ask for erasure by writing to info@strongersc.com.

Applications re-submitting projects already awarded in previous editions of «Strongers for Research» are not eligible.

Requirements are attested by a declaration made in the application form on the applicant's own responsibility. Applicants are aware that a false declaration leads to exclusion from the Call or revocation of the award with repayment, and may also have criminal consequences under the law.

Before payment, winners send a copy of a valid identity document and any documentation Strongers may request as evidence of the requirements. If a winner turns out not to meet the requirements, the next applicant in the ranking takes their place.

5. How to apply

Applications are submitted **online only**, through the form at **strongers.org/en/grant/2026/candidatura**, by the deadline in section 10. Applications sent by email, certified email (PEC) or post are not accepted.

Applications may be written in Italian or English, as the applicant prefers. If content is mixed, the English version is used for the technical evaluation.

What the form contains

- Applicant details: full name, date of birth, email, phone, institution and position, degree (PhD, MD or PharmD).
- The project:
  - title and duration;
  - research areas (one or more, from those in section 2);
  - description and analysis of the problem;
  - proposed solutions and interventions based on scientific evidence;
  - feasibility and critical issues;
  - geographical areas involved and transferability;
  - institutional and policy framework (including regional plans and programmes);
  - general objective and specific objective, each with its evaluation plan;
  - references;
  - scientific coordinator: name, institution, email.
- Use of the award: how it will be used for your training and professional growth, with a spending plan.
- Funding received in the last 24 months for the same activities (band and short description), for section 6.
- PDF attachments, max 5 MB each:
  - Europass CV with list of publications (max 3 pages);
  - motivation letter (max 1 page).
- Declarations:
  - meeting the requirements of section 4, on your own responsibility;
  - no conflict of interest with Strongers Social Club ETS;
  - acceptance of these Rules and, specifically, of the clauses on review (section 6) and revocation (section 7);
  - having read the privacy notice (section 8).

Each text in the form has a character limit, shown next to the field and on the Call page under «The form questions»: it is best to prepare your answers beforehand and paste them in. The form never truncates text: it tells you when a limit is exceeded.

Do not include health data about identifiable people, such as patients: scientific data must be reported in aggregate or anonymous form only. You do not need to mention your own health or your family's: the Committee does not take it into account.

After submitting, applicants receive a confirmation email with the application reference number. If it has not arrived within an hour, applicants write to info@strongersc.com.

6. Evaluation

Applications are evaluated by the Scientific Committee of Strongers Social Club ETS, made up of three members, against the following criteria. Each member declares any conflict of interest with applicants and abstains from evaluating that application if a potential conflict exists.

Before evaluation, the secretariat checks that applications are complete and meet the formal requirements; applications that do not meet them are excluded and the applicant is informed. Every applicant receives the outcome by email.

Evaluation criteria (100 points)

The project (50 points)

1. Scientific quality (30 points): originality of the project (max 15); scientific and methodological rigour (max 15).
2. Clinical impact (20 points): potential impact on the prevention, diagnosis or treatment of lung cancer.

Use of funds and professional growth (35 points)

3. Professional growth (20 points): consistency with the applicant's career path (max 7); acquisition of new qualifying skills (max 8); networking and future opportunities (max 5).
4. Feasibility and spending plan (15 points): clarity and detail of expense items (max 5); realistic costs for the activities (max 5); alignment between proposed spending and professional growth (max 5).

Equity and impact of the funding (15 points)

5. Funding received in the 24 months before the application. The award supports additional professional growth activities: other funding for the same plan does not exclude the application, but counts in the evaluation according to this grid:

Funding declared	Points	Note
None or less than €5,000	15	No support or micro-funding only
€5,001 to €15,000	12	Small grants or single awards
€15,001 to €25,000	9	Partial coverage already available
€25,001 to €50,000	4	Plan already largely covered
More than €50,000	0	Large grants

How the ranking is set

1. Each Committee member scores independently.
2. The final score is the arithmetic mean of the three scores.

Ties

In case of an equal mean score, the ranking is set by these criteria, in order:

1. higher mean score in «Scientific quality»;
2. higher mean score in «Professional growth»;
3. less funding received in the last 24 months;
4. younger age;
5. reasoned collegial decision of the Committee.

Review

The Scientific Committee's judgement on merit is a technical assessment and is not subject to review on the merits. Within 15 days of being notified of the outcome, applicants may ask info@strongersc.com for their scores and request a review for material errors or breaches of these Rules; Strongers replies within 30 days.

7. Awards

The funds in section 3 are allocated to **4 (four) awards of equal value, €3,000.00 gross** (three thousand euros) each, given to the top 4 projects in the Scientific Committee's ranking.

The award is subject to the applicable tax rules: Strongers applies any withholding required and informs the winner. Payment is made in a single bank transfer to the beneficiary's personal IBAN, within 30 days of the Strongers Awards ceremony and of receipt of the personal and tax details requested.

Eligible expenses

The award must be used to:

- attend international oncology conferences, presenting your research;
- publish your results in scientific journals;
- attend specialist courses on lung cancer;
- support specific project activities.

Undocumented costs, costs incurred before the award is granted, or more than 18 months after payment, are not eligible.

Reporting

Each winner reports on expenses within 18 months of payment, sending to strongersc@pec.it:

- a technical-scientific report (max 3 pages);
- an expense report with supporting documents (receipts or invoices in their name, tickets, conference fees);
- any publications or posters produced.

Strongers may request additional information or clarification. In case of false declarations, improper use or failure to report on time, Strongers may revoke the award. Before revoking, Strongers notifies the breach in writing and allows 30 days for clarification or additional documents. Repayment concerns sums not accounted for or used improperly.

Strongers Awards

Winners are honoured at the Strongers Awards ceremony for the 2026 edition, in Rome, on a date to be announced. Attendance is expected but is not a condition for receiving the award. Winners are also invited to the following year's ceremony to present the results achieved thanks to the award.

8. General rules and privacy

Acceptance of the Rules

Taking part in the Call implies full acceptance of these Rules. The Italian text of the Rules prevails over any translation; the rule in section 5 on mixed content concerns only the language of the application.

Privacy notice for applicants (Articles 13 and 14 GDPR)

Controller. Strongers Social Club ETS, via Ruggero Fiore 38, 00136 Rome, Italy, email info@strongersc.com (the «Controller»). We have not appointed a data protection officer: requests are handled by the Controller.

Data processed.

- Identification and contact data: full name, date of birth, email, phone.
- Professional and academic data: CV, publications, institution and position, degree, funding received.
- Project content, spending plan and references.

- Name, institution and email of the scientific coordinator, provided by the applicant. The Controller informs the coordinator within one month of receiving the application, with this notice.
- For winners only: copy of identity document, tax code, IBAN and expense documents, to pay the award and handle reporting.
- Log of the service emails sent (recipient, subject, text without personal links, date), to prove that the communications about the Call were sent.
- Technical data of the submission: IP address and technical browser signals, processed by the anti-bot service at the time of submission and by the server's technical logs.

The Controller does not request health data or other special categories of data (Article 9 GDPR). If an applicant includes them anyway, for example by mentioning their health in the letter, they are processed only to examine the application and deleted with it.

Purposes and legal bases.

1. Running the Call: receiving the application, checking requirements, evaluation by the Scientific Committee, notifying the outcome, the ceremony, payment and reporting. Legal basis: pre-contractual and contractual measures requested by the data subject (Article 6.1.b GDPR).
2. Administrative, accounting and tax obligations related to the award. Legal basis: legal obligation (Article 6.1.c GDPR).
3. Protection of the Controller: checks on declarations, abuse prevention, legal defence, proof that communications were sent and of withdrawals. Legal basis: legitimate interest (Article 6.1.f GDPR). For the scientific coordinator the legal basis is the Controller's legitimate interest in checking what is stated in the application (Article 6.1.f GDPR): their data come from the applicant, and the coordinator may object by writing to info@strongersc.com.
4. Publication of winners with name, institution and project title on the Strongers website and channels. Legal basis: legitimate interest in the transparency of the Call (Article 6.1.f GDPR). Winners may object at any time by writing to info@strongersc.com. Applicants who do not win are never published.
5. Security of the form and prevention of automated submissions (Cloudflare Turnstile check, server technical logs kept for 90 days). Legal basis: legitimate interest (Article 6.1.f GDPR).

Provision of data. The form data are required to take part: without them, the application cannot be examined.

How we process data. Data are processed electronically with appropriate security measures (Article 32 GDPR). Attachments are stored in an area of the server not accessible from the web and are visible only to the Controller's authorised staff and the Scientific Committee. Evaluation is carried out by people: there is no automated decision-making or profiling (Article 22 GDPR).

Who receives the data.

- Members of the Scientific Committee, authorised and bound by confidentiality.
- Providers processing data on behalf of the Controller as processors (Article 28 GDPR):
  - Hetzner Online GmbH (Germany): website hosting and storage of applications;
  - Brevo (Sendinblue SAS, France): sending service emails, such as the application confirmation;
  - Cloudflare, Inc. (United States): anti-bot check on the form (Turnstile);
  - Aruba S.p.A. (Italy): the Controller's email and certified email.

- Public authorities, when required by law.

Website backups are encrypted on our server, with a key held only by the Controller, before being stored on Dropbox (Dropbox, Inc., servers in the United States): Dropbox stores files it cannot read.

Transfers outside the EU. Cloudflare and Dropbox may process data in the United States. The transfer is based on the EU-US adequacy decision (EU-U.S. Data Privacy Framework), to which the companies adhere; failing that, on the European Commission's standard contractual clauses (Article 46 GDPR).

Retention.

- Applicants who do not win: up to 24 months from notification of the outcome, after which data and attachments are deleted.
- Winners: CV and motivation letter up to 12 months after reporting is closed; identity document until the award is paid; award decision, payment data and expense documents for 10 years (Article 2220 of the Italian Civil Code and tax rules); name, institution and project title published until the winner objects.
- Withdrawn applications: data and attachments are deleted on withdrawal; the reference, language and submission and withdrawal dates are kept for up to 24 months from the close of the Call, as proof of the withdrawal.
- Service email log: up to 24 months from sending; on withdrawal the text of the confirmation email is deleted from the log.
- After deletion, data may remain for at most 2 months in encrypted backup copies, which are not consulted; if a backup is restored, deletions are applied again.

Rights. Data subjects may exercise their rights under Articles 15–22 GDPR (access, rectification, erasure, restriction, portability, objection) by writing to info@strongersc.com, and may lodge a complaint with the Italian Data Protection Authority (garanteprivacy.it). Until the deadline, applicants can also withdraw their application themselves, from the personal link in the confirmation email. Erasure before the outcome means withdrawing the application; for winners, erasure is limited by legal obligations (Article 17.3.b GDPR).

Ceremony photos and videos. Photos and videos of the Strongers Awards are processed under a separate notice and consent collected at the event.

Updates. The current version of this notice is published on the Call page and referred to in the application form.

9. Contacts

For information about the Call: info@strongersc.com, by **23:59 on 04/01/2027**. Answers to frequently asked questions are published on the Call page.

10. Timeline

Phase	Date
Applications open	25/11/2026, 09:00
Last day for questions	04/01/2027, 23:59
Applications close	**09/01/2027, 23:59**
Outcome sent to each applicant and winners published	within 2 months of closing
Review requests	within 15 days of the outcome
Strongers Awards ceremony	within 2 months of the outcome
Payment of awards	within 30 days of the ceremony

Times are Italian time. The online form closes automatically at the deadline: the time of receipt recorded by the website is authoritative.

In case of a documented malfunction of the form in the 48 hours before the deadline, Strongers may extend the deadline for everyone, with a notice on the Call page.