

SCIENTIFIC CALL FOR PROPOSALS AFM-TELETHON 2026

THIS INTERNATIONAL CALL FOR PROPOSALS, OPEN TO BOTH FRENCH AND FOREIGN TEAMS, AIMS TO SUPPORT RESEARCH ON THE FOLLOWING TOPICS:

Projects on muscle, motor neuron, or neuromuscular junction physiology and/or neuromuscular diseases

1. Fundamental research projects aimed at increasing our understanding of molecular, cellular, physiological and pathological mechanisms, involving the structure and function of skeletal muscles, motor neurons, neuromuscular junctions, aging and degeneration/regeneration in physiological and pathological conditions.
2. Research projects aimed at increasing our understanding of the clinical and genetic heterogeneity of neuromuscular diseases, including undiagnosed ones.
3. Genetic cardiomyopathies with muscle structure abnormalities.
4. Physiopathology of smooth muscle in relation to neuromuscular diseases.
5. Differentiation of adult, embryonic and iPS stem cells into skeletal/ cardiac muscles or neuronal cells (including motor neurons) (in physiological and pathological conditions).
6. Genetic/epigenetic regulation of genes and characterization of gene regulation networks within the neuromuscular system.
7. Pharmacotherapies of neuromuscular diseases.
8. Translational research: tools for evaluation of treatments for neuromuscular diseases
 - Outcome measures: functional, connected objects, imaging
 - Genomic, transcriptomic, proteomic, metabolomic biomarkers of pathologies and/or therapies
 - New cellular, tissue and animal models; organoids
 - Use or development of new artificial intelligence approaches

Precisions:

- For projects concerning cardiac research, the applicant has to justify why this is of interest for neuromuscular pathologies, for example, the use of skeletal muscle cells or a neuromuscular animal model system.
- For projects concerning mitochondria, the applicant has to justify why this is of interest for neuromuscular pathologies, for example, the use of a mitochondrial myopathy model.
- For projects concerning nervous system diseases, eligible diseases are those related to motor neurons or neuromuscular junctions.
- Concerning projects on ALS, priority will be given to therapeutic innovation.

Projects on rare genetic diseases (including neuromuscular diseases)

9. Gene and/or cell therapy for rare genetic disorders
 - Breakthrough innovation, strategies to optimize the gene therapy approaches
 - Gene transfer and gene correction / Genome editing
 - Treatments using genetically-modified cells
 - Development of delivery strategies and biomaterials
 - Control of the immune response (auto-immunity, anti-vector and anti-transgene responses, etc.)
10. Strategies for modifying gene expression both at the gene level (cis, trans or epigenetic modifications) and RNA level
 - Projects based on gene transfer, chemical molecules or biotherapies

TYPES OF FINANCING:

The selected projects will be subject to an agreement with AFM-Telethon. AFM-Telethon may decide to finance the selected project under a collaboration which entails a co-ownership of the results.

- Trampoline grant: intended to support young teams or investigators early in their professional career (less than 10 years after thesis, either permanent or non-permanent position), and/or early stage innovative and high-risk projects. This grant is awarded for a maximum of 50,000 euros for one year.
- Research project for one year, renewable for a second year.
- Post-doctoral fellowship for one year, renewable for a second year.

Call opening 12 December 2025 / Deadline 20 January 2026 (17:00 Paris France time)

- PhD fellowship (open to students enrolled in a French university doctoral degree program) for a maximum of three years.

Call opening 3 February 2026 / Deadline 10 March 2026 (17:00 Paris France time)

Please note that Fellowship salaries (PhD and post-doctoral fellowships) cannot be included in the budget of a Research grant or a Trampoline grant. PhD and post-doctoral fellows must submit a separate application to cover their salary.

Deadlines and instructions for applications are available on the [AFM-Telethon website](https://www.afm-telethon.fr).

[Access to the applicant portal](https://www.afm-telethon.fr)

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PRESIDENT OF AFM-TELETHON

JUDITH MELKI
PRESIDENT OF THE SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL

<http://www.afm-telethon.com>