

## **REGULATION OF THE RESPIRATORY TECHNOLOGIES PITCH CONTEST**

### **Edition September 2026**

#### **Article 1 – Organizer**

- 1.1 The Respiratory Technologies Pitch Contest (hereinafter, the “Contest”) is organized and managed in the person of Prof. Francesca Buttini, Associate Professor at the University of Parma, Food and Drug Department, Parco Area delle Scienze 27a, Parma Italy (hereinafter, the “Organizer”).
- 1.2 The Respiratory Technologies Pitch Contest is organized together with the conference “Exploring the Future of Inhalation drug delivery” and the event will take place in Parma on the 11<sup>th</sup> September 2026.
- 1.3 The Organizer is solely responsible for the conception, organization, execution, and supervision of the Contest.

#### **Article 2 – Purpose of the Contest**

- 2.1 The Contest aims to identify, promote, and support innovative technological solutions in the field of respiratory health and respiratory technologies, fostering scientific valorization, technology transfer, and earlystage entrepreneurial initiatives.
- 2.2 The Contest is intended exclusively for PhD students, Postdocs, Researchers and earlystage startups or small medium enterprises (SME), as defined in this Regulation.

#### **Article 3 – Definitions**

For the purposes of this Regulation, the following definitions shall apply:

- a) **“Respiratory Technologies”**: products, services, platforms, devices, software, or methodologies addressing prevention, diagnosis, monitoring, treatment, rehabilitation, or care of respiratory diseases or conditions.
- b) **“PhD/Postdoc/Researcher Track”**: the Contest track reserved for individuals enrolled in a PhD program or holding a postdoctoral or research position at the time of application.
- c) **“Startup Track/SME”**: the Contest track reserved for startups/Small Medium Enterprises incorporated less than five (5) years prior to the application deadline.
- d) **“Applicant”**: any individual or legal entity submitting in application pursuant to this Regulation.
- e) **“Jury”**: the independent evaluation body appointed by the Organizer.
- f) **“Final Event”**: the public event during which selected finalists present their projects.

## **Article 4 – Contest Tracks**

4.1 The Contest is structured into the following tracks:

- PhD/Postdoc/Researcher Track
- Startup/SME Track

4.2 Each Applicant may submit only one application and may apply to only one track.

## **Article 5 – Eligibility Requirements**

5.1 All submitted ideas and projects must be at a Technology Readiness Level (TRL) between 2 and 5.

5.2 PhD/Postdoc/ Researcher Track

Applicants under the PhD/Postdoc/ Researcher Track must:

- a) be enrolled in an accredited PhD program or holding a postdoctoral or research position at the application deadline;
- b) provide the self-declaration certifying such position;
- c) be at least eighteen (18) years of age.

5.3 Startup/SME Track

Applicants under the Startup/SME Track must:

- a) be legal entities duly incorporated under applicable law;
- b) have been incorporated less than five (5) years prior to the application deadline;
- c) provide the self-declaration certifying such request and that the company is in good legal and financial standing.

5.4 General Exclusions

The following are not eligible:

- employees of the Organizer directly involved in the Contest;
- members of the Jury;
- projects unrelated to respiratory technologies;
- applications containing false, misleading, or incomplete information.

## **Article 6 – Application Procedure**

6.1 Applications must be submitted within the deadline specified in the Call for Applications via the official submission platform.

6.2 Mandatory submission documents include:

- completed application form;

- submission deck (maximum ten (10) slides);
- self-declaration documentation (point “c” of articles 5.2 and 5.3);

6.3 The official language of the Contest shall be English.

### **Article 7 – Selection Process**

7.1 The selection process shall consist of:

- a) formal eligibility verification;
- b) qualitative evaluation based on the criteria set forth in Article 9;
- c) selection of finalists invited to the Final Event.

7.2 The Organizer reserves the right to request clarifications or additional documentation.

### **Article 8 – Final Pitch Event**

8.1 The Final Event shall be **open to the public**.

8.2 Finalists shall present their projects live before the Jury.

8.3 Each finalist shall be allocated:

- ten (10) minutes for pitch deck presentation;
- five (5) minutes for questions and answers.

8.4 Applicants acknowledge that no confidentiality obligations apply to information disclosed during the Final Event.

### **Article 9 – Evaluation Criteria**

9.1 Projects shall be evaluated according to the following differently weighted criteria:

- a) Relevance of the unmet clinical or patient need;
- b) Proposed solution and robustness of presented data;
- c) Degree of innovation and expected impact on respiratory health;
- d) Validation plan and technical/scientific feasibility;
- e) Regulatory and ethical awareness;
- f) Sustainability and health equity impact;
- g) Market landscape analysis and business potential;
- h) Team competence.

9.2 The Jury’s evaluations and decisions shall be final and binding.

### **Article 10 – Jury and Conflict of Interest**

10.1 The Jury shall be appointed by the Organizer and composed of qualified experts.

10.2 Jury members shall declare any actual or potential conflict of interest.

10.3 In case of conflict, the Jury member shall abstain from evaluation.

## Article 11 – Prizes

11.1 Three (3) prizes shall be awarded:

- **Startup/SME Prize:** awarded to the highest-ranked project within this category; prize consisting of consultancy services by a primary professional firm valued at € 5,000 (five thousand euros);
- **PhD/Postdoc/Researcher Prize:** awarded to the highest-ranked project within the PhD/Postdoc/Researcher category; prize consisting of six (6) months of structured mentoring provided by a corporate partner (Chiesi Farmaceutici);
- **Overall Excellence Prize:** awarded to the highest-ranked project among all submissions, excluding the projects already awarded the prizes above; prize consisting of six (6) months of structured mentoring provided by a corporate partner (Chiesi Farmaceutici).

11.2 Consulting/Mentoring activities are nontransferable and governed by separate agreements.

## Article 12 – Intellectual Property

12.1 All intellectual property rights related to submitted projects shall remain with the Applicants.

12.2 Participation in the Contest does not imply any transfer or licensing of intellectual property to the Organizer.

## Article 13 – Publicity and Communication

13.1 Applicants authorize the Organizer to use their names, logos, images, and nonconfidential project descriptions for institutional and promotional purposes.

13.2 Such authorization is granted free of charge and for an unlimited duration.

## Article 14 – Data Protection

14.1 Personal data shall be processed in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR) and applicable Italian legislation.

14.2 Detailed information shall be provided in the official Privacy Notice.

## Article 15 – Disqualification

15.1 The Organizer reserves the right to disqualify Applicants in case of:

- a) breach of this Regulation;

- b) false declarations;
- c) unlawful or unethical conduct.

#### **Article 16 – Liability**

16.1 The Organizer shall not be liable for any damage arising from participation in the Contest, except in cases of willful misconduct or gross negligence.

#### **Article 17 – Amendments and Cancellation**

17.1 The Organizer reserves the right to amend, suspend, or cancel the Contest for justified reasons, without liability.

#### **Article 18 – Governing Law and Jurisdiction**

18.1 This Regulation shall be governed by Italian law.

18.2 Any dispute shall fall under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Court of Parma, Italy.

#### **Article 19 – Acceptance of the Regulation**

19.1 Submission of an application constitutes full, unconditional acceptance of this Regulation.