

Dolphin Tank @EYENOVATE | FLORetina-ICOOR 2026

Where visionary ideas meet strategic capital

APPLICATION OPEN

The Dolphin Tank is EYENOVATE's premier innovation showcase, created to identify and accelerate breakthrough technologies in ophthalmology and vision science.

Inspired by the collaborative spirit of dolphins, this platform replaces traditional pitch competitions with expert-driven dialogue, connecting early-stage innovators with global leaders in retina, industry, investment, and clinical research. Hosted as part of **FLORetina-ICOOR 2026** in Florence, Italy, the Dolphin Tank offers founders a unique opportunity to validate their innovation, build strategic partnerships, attract early-stage investment, and accelerate the path to clinical and commercial success.

Who Should Apply

We welcome applications from:

- Early-stage startups
- Academic spin-offs
- Research teams
- Clinician innovators and entrepreneurs

developing solutions in:

- Therapeutics, medical devices & surgical technologies
- Digital Health & Artificial Intelligence
- Diagnostics & Imaging

Event Overview

- **Event:** EYENOVATE @FLORetina-ICOOR 2026
- **Date:** 3/4 December 2026
- **Location:** Florence, Italy
- **Format:** Live, on-site
- **Selected showcase projects:** up to 12
- **Innovation Award finalists:** 3

The Pitch

Selected innovators will deliver a **3-minute high-impact presentation** highlighting:

- The unmet clinical need
- The innovation
- Clinical and commercial potential

Each presentation is followed by live feedback from the "Dolphins"—an international panel of:

- Retina specialists and key opinion leaders
- Industry executives
- Investors and venture partners
- Regulatory and commercialization experts

Be Part of the future of Retina Innovation

Whether you are building the next breakthrough therapy, AI platform, surgical technology or diagnostic solution, the Dolphin Tank is your opportunity to connect with the people who can help bring your innovation to patients.

For all information, please contact: info@eyenovate.org | Ms Rossella Salvoni



Why Participate?

For Innovators

- Present to one of the world's leading retina communities
- Receive strategic feedback from international experts
- Connect with investors, industry partners and clinical collaborators
- Explore pilot studies, licensing and funding opportunities
- Become part of the EYENOVATE innovation ecosystem

For Industry & Investors

- Discover high-potential technologies before they reach the market
- Meet founders and scientific innovators
- Identify investment, licensing and co-development opportunities

For Clinicians & Researchers

- Experience the next generation of ophthalmic innovation
- Contribute expert insight to emerging technologies
- Help shape the future of retinal care

Showcase & Innovation Award

Applicants may participate through one of two pathways:

Innovation Showcase

Selected projects present live, receive expert feedback, and compete for the **Best Innovation Presentation** recognition.

Dolphin Tank Innovation Award:

Three finalists, selected by the Scientific Review Committee, compete for the **EYENOVATE @ FLORetina Innovation Award**.

The winning project may receive:

- International recognition
- Access to strategic partners and investors
- Combined awards, including potential seed investment of **up to US\$50,000** to support development or commercialization.*

**Investment awards are subject to the program's Terms & Conditions and execution of applicable investment agreements.*

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Selection process

STEP 1

Letter of Intent (LOI)

Submit a concise 2-3 page overview describing:

- The innovation
- Clinical need
- Scientific rationale
- Development stage
- Market opportunity
- Team

STEP 2

Showcase Selection

Applications are reviewed by the "Dolphin Committee", with selected projects invited to present at FLORetina.

STEP 3

Innovation Award Selection

Shortlisted applicants submit an expanded proposal and investment information. 12 finalists are selected to compete live during the Dolphin Tank.

Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be assessed on:

- Clinical relevance
- Scientific quality
- Innovation and differentiation
- Potential patient impact
- Commercial opportunity
- Regulatory feasibility
- Strength of the team



Deadline for application:
18 October 2026 | 0:00 CEST



**Click here to upload
your application**

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