Prostate Cancer UK 2014 Call for Movember Translational Research Grants - Guidance Notes

Remit

Through this call we aim to fund research that takes early stage basic discoveries that we and/or others have previously funded a stage closer to making a difference to men.

Our aim in funding research is to find answers that make tangible improvements for men affected by prostate cancer. We fund right across the translational spectrum from basic, early discovery work right through to research to introduce or improve treatment pathways that can be quickly adopted into clinical practice. We are keen to ensure that where basic science has shown the potential to make a real difference to men there is funding available to take that work to the next stage and bring new discoveries closer to widespread roll out. For that reason, we are launching a call for translational research projects.

It is important to note that this call for translational research projects is in addition to our regular grant rounds. We remain committed to supporting the range of research that we currently fund, specifically including basic discovery research in *in vitro* or other model systems. However, we are determined to ensure research that has the potential to make a difference for men affected by prostate cancer does not fail to make a difference just through a lack of funding needed to make the leap from bench to bedside or mouse to man.

Application process

This is the first call in this area that we have run and therefore we have kept the eligibility as broad as possible (see below for details). To ensure that the applications that enter the full assessment process for this call meet with our expectations in terms of innovation and truly translational potential, and to reduce the time burden required for applicants who do not meet those criteria, there will be a two-stage application. The first stage involves a short expression of interest in which you will be asked to provide the following information (please see page 5 for further details):

- Name and institution of the PI and Co-applicants
- Brief summary of proposed research
- Statement outlining how this meets the remit of this call, with particular emphasis on why you consider it to be translational
- Estimated timeline for delivery of research
- Topline estimate of likely cost (NB you will be able to change this at the full application stage but
should aim to provide an accurate and realistic estimate to the nearest £100k). Final date for the submission of Expressions of Interests is 12noon 27 October 2014.

Expressions of interest will be assessed for fit against our research strategy, as well as whether they have the potential for translation of previous findings, and whether that translational step would move those findings significantly closer to clinical implementation. Those expressions of interest that do not score well against all of those criteria will be rejected without peer review. Applicants who have submitted expressions of interest that are selected to proceed into full assessment will be notified by 14th November 2014 and the full application form will be released to those applicants at that point.

The final deadline for the submission of full applications will be 17th December 2014. Full applications received by that date will be sent for external peer review, followed by assessment by an expert panel comprising experts in translational research as well as members of Prostate Cancer UK’s Research Advisory Committee.

Full applications will be assessed based on the following criteria:
- Importance and potential to make a difference to men affected by prostate cancer
- Novelty and level of innovation
- Significance of the translational step being proposed
- Likelihood (and speed) of potential clinical impact
- Quality of science
- Quality, appropriateness and track record of team
- Value for money

We expect to inform candidates of funding decisions by late February 2015.

**Budget**

The total budget for the 2014 Prostate Cancer UK Translational Call is £1m. No upper limit is set for individual projects and we would advise applicants to ensure that the amount requested is a realistic reflection of what is needed to deliver the translational step they are aiming for. However, value for money will be a consideration in making final funding decisions.

We are aware that there is a strong possibility that, through running a call such as this for the first time, we may discover a number of high impact, fundable projects that will exceed the funding envelope. If this is the case we will endeavour to explore other mechanisms to provide funding for those projects.

**Targeted Call: eligibility criteria**

With funding from the Movember Foundation, Prostate Cancer UK calls for research proposals which aim to address our key priority areas for research:
- Identifying men at highest risk of developing clinically significant prostate cancer;
- Distinguishing aggressive prostate cancer from indolent disease;
- Finding new, targeted treatments for advanced prostate cancer;

Please see our Research Strategy for further details on these priority areas. Further details may also be found in our Frequently Asked Questions document.
Projects should not exceed five years in duration and, as mentioned above, there is no upper budget limitation for individual projects. Our aim through this call is to fund research that results in a significant step along the translational pathway. In planning the call we have considered several types of project that we feel would fit that remit and these are listed below with brief guidance notes for each type. However, this list may not be exhaustive and applicants with proposed research that falls outside these areas should still consider applying. In the first instance they should contact the research team to provide brief details of their proposed research.

1. **Translational projects aimed at delivering new treatments**

   Proposals in this area that we are particularly keen to receive include:
   - Clinical trials of new treatments, particularly first in man, Phase 1, and early Phase 2 studies
   - Clinical trials as above, focusing on combination treatments
   - Clinical trials, as above, focusing on finding the best responders to treatments, and translational research to develop the companion diagnostics or response-predictive biomarkers to achieve this aim.

   Applicants should note the following points.
   - Projects aiming to deliver translation of research at stages before Phase 1 trials (e.g. from *in vitro* to relevant animal model) are eligible for this call. However, they will be assessed against all other applications and applicants should be aware that potential for (and speed to) eventual clinical impact will be a key scoring criterion. All applicants, but especially those proposing research that is not based on prospective trials in patients, will need to provide a clear path to impact which is realistically achievable if the proposal were to be funded.
   
   Research with no realistic chance of being tested in men within 5 years of now is unlikely to be funded through this call and should be submitted instead to one of our regular funding rounds.
   - Radiotherapy treatments are specifically included under this heading.

2. **Translation of research into biological or genetic markers of aggressive disease towards clinical implementation**

   Proposals in this area that we are particularly keen to receive include:
   - Validation of previously-discovered markers in prospective cohorts (or proof of concept work needed to demonstrate feasibility of the recruitment approach in order to secure large scale grant funding to this end)
   - Validation of previously-reported markers in different reference cohorts

   Applicants should note the following points.
   - Projects that validate multiple markers are likely to be viewed more favourably than those that focus on a single marker.
   - The focus of this area of the call, as per our research strategy, should be genetic or biological markers that indicate high risk of aggressive disease or which can be used to distinguish between aggressive and indolent cancer.

3. **Translational research aimed at delivering new imaging techniques**

   Proposals in this area that we are particularly keen to receive include:
- Translation of imaging techniques that have previously shown promise in model systems but which have not yet been trialled in men

Applicants should note the following points.

- Applicants should be aware that proposals in this area that we consider to be tweaks to existing techniques that are already being used clinically or trialled in men are unlikely to be shortlisted to the second stage. Again, it is crucial that applicants make clear how their proposal is innovative and translational.

Please note that all applications should be costed in line with the AcoRD framework for attributing the costs of clinical research.

In addition, the following criteria must also be met:

- Awards under this call are only available to researchers working within the UK (including N. Ireland), in a recognised academic or clinical institution.

- Primary Applicants should have a strong track record in their field, and will normally hold tenured or tenure-track academic appointments. Clinical applicants should hold an honorary academic contract at a recognised academic institution.

- Projects can include a period of research outside the UK where there is a collaborator based overseas. However, research must be conducted predominantly in the UK and Prostate Cancer UK will not make any direct payments to non-UK institutions or pay invoices in any currency other than UK sterling.

- Projects which involve an industry partner or collaborator are eligible under this call. However the industry partner will be expected to be able to sign up to our standard terms and conditions including our IP terms and conditions.

We will not accept:
- Applications intended solely or primarily to fund the purchase of equipment
- Applications from researchers based entirely or primarily outside the UK
- Applications led by commercial organisations

If you are unsure about the eligibility and remit of your project, or if you have any queries about completing the application form, you must contact the Research Team in advance of the submission deadline and before you submit your application (email: research@prostatecanceruk.org, or phone: 0203 310 7037). Once the deadline has passed, you will no longer be able to submit your proposal and there will be no opportunity to debate individual circumstances. Applications which are incomplete, which do not meet the requirements detailed above and which are deemed to be outside of our research strategy will be rejected without peer review.

Making your application

Applications are to be made using our online Prostate Cancer UK CC Grant Tracker system. You must fill out all sections of the application form (notes below) and yourself, the Joint Lead Applicant, and all Co-applicants must confirm their involvement in the proposal and must also approve the application before it can be submitted. Collaborators are not required to confirm their participation at this stage.

The deadline for Expressions of Interest is 12 noon on Monday 27 October 2014.
The application process will consist of two stages. The first stage involves a short expression of interest application. Applicants will be notified by 14 November 2014 and those that have been shortlisted to the second stage will have access to the full application form at this point. Stage 2 applications must be submitted by 17 December 2014, after which they will be sent for external peer review, followed by assessment by our expert panel.

Final funding decisions will be made at the end of February 2015 and applicants will be informed of the outcome by email shortly afterwards. Once notified of our intention to award, we will begin the contracting process immediately. It is our expectation that contracting should be completed within one month of notification of award, and that grant funding should then be taken up within six months of completion of contracting.

Notes on the application form

Applicant details
The Lead Applicant must be the Principal Investigator who will lead the research and be responsible for delivering the project. In the instance of Joint Lead Applicants, please nominate one of the leads to act as the Primary Lead Applicant for the purposes of completing the online form. Any Joint Lead applicant on the proposal should be added via the ‘Personnel’ section. The online system obtains your details from the contact details entered when first registering with the system. Please ensure that the relevant details are filled in accurately in the ‘Manage My Details – Basic Information’ section. Also ensure that your CV details under the ‘Manage My Details’ section are up to date as they will automatically appear on this page.

Personnel
This section allows you to add the details of any Joint Lead Applicant, Co-applicants and Collaborators involved in the proposal.

Joint Lead Applicant
As mentioned above, any Joint Lead Applicant on this proposal should be added here. To add a Joint Lead Applicant, click on ‘Add Joint Lead Applicant’, input the required name and either select the contact if already on our database or otherwise input their details. Once added, an email will be sent to that person inviting them to take part in this application. The Joint Lead Applicant must accept this invitation before the form can be submitted. As mentioned above, approval from the Joint Lead Applicant will be required before the proposal has been ‘submitted’.

Co-applicants:
Include details of all co-applicants involved in the project. To add their information, click on ‘Add Co-Applicant’, input their name within the corresponding search fields and either select the contact if already on our database or otherwise input their details. Once added, an email will be sent to the potential co-applicant inviting them to take part in this application. Repeat this procedure for all co-applicants on the proposal. Each co-applicant must accept this invitation to confirm their participation on the proposal.

As with the Joint Lead Applicant, all co-applicants must confirm their participation AND approve the application BEFORE the proposal can be ‘submitted’.

Collaborators:
To include a collaborator onto the proposal, click on ‘Add Collaborator’ and follow the same procedures as with adding a co-applicant (detailed above). Repeat this procedure for all collaborators on the proposal. Collaborators are not required to confirm their participation at this stage.
Project summary
Provide a concise scientific title for your project, along with an indication of the project duration and an estimate of the amount of funding being requested.

Please provide a brief description of your proposed project, outlining the background to the application, the proposed research to be undertaken and the expected outcomes (in no more than 1000 words). In addition to this brief summary, within this section you must also explain how your project meets the remit of this call, most notably why you consider this research to be translational (in no more than 500 words).

Finally, please select up to 6 keywords from the list provided which best describe the project.

Declarations
The Lead Applicant must approve the application before submission to confirm that they have read the corresponding terms and conditions and that all the information provided is accurate and correct.

Please note that all mandatory sections of the form must be completed (within the stipulated word limits), and the Joint Lead Applicant and all co-applicants (where applicable) must confirm their involvement and approve the proposal before the application can be submitted. Any such discrepancies will be flagged under the ‘Validation’ section of the online form, and you will be unable to submit your application until these have been resolved.

If you have any queries regarding this application please contact the Research Team (email: grants@prostatecanceruk.org, research@prostatecanceruk.org, or phone: 0203 310 7037) Prostate Cancer UK is a charity registered in England and Wales (1005541) and in Scotland (SCO39332)