## wellcome_trust_strategic_award

## Industrial Seed Corn Funding to develop a ‘Translational Roadmap’ with the Medicines Discovery Catapult

The aim of this award is to accelerate the translation of promising medicines discovery research underway at the University of Exeter (UoE).

This call is being proposed for working jointly with the Medicines Discovery Catapult (MDC), an orgranisation dedicated to accelerating drug discovery in the UK, as part of a new strategic partnership between the two institutions.

**Any UoE researchers and/or UoE associated spin-out companies with projects related to drug discovery are encouraged to apply.**

In this Call, it is envisaged that **two** projects will be funded to develop a **“Translational Roadmap”** with the MDC Virtual R&D team. The MDC’s VR&D team has substantial drug discovery expertise, and its members have held external innovation roles in large pharmaceutical organisations.

In brief, a translational roadmap could broadly consist of (but is not limited to) the following elements:

- Application of industrial rigour to review all data associated with the project

- Planning of the most efficient/effective line of site to clinic, plausibly with costs & routes to delivery

- Understanding of regulatory considerations

- Understanding of the market and therapeutics currently in development

- Understanding the suitability of the therapeutic to the patient population in question

The configuration of the Roadmap may change based upon the project in question, but essentially answers the following questions: i) Should we develop this molecule/target? ii) What scientific and technical questions do we need to address to build confidence in the data or effect? iii) How/where do we develop the therapeutic onwards?

This builds confidence for onward grant submissions and investor raises, for which the MDC would be happy to discuss previous successes with academic partners and onwards strategies on an individual basis.

**Further, as a potential alternative to a Roadmap, the panel may also consider funding projects with exceptional translational promise that need to access the MDC’s experimental expertise to achieve a critical translational goal.** Such awards would only be considered after detailed discussions between the academic and the MDC, to judge whether the proposed experimental data gathering would benefit the commercial/translational pathway sufficiently to justify funding via this Call.

**Applicants interested in this Call must contact Jehangir Cama (****j.cama@exeter.ac.uk****) or Harshal Patil (****h.patil@exeter.ac.uk****) to discuss the scheme in advance of an application.** **Applications that have not been discussed in advance will not be considered.** Successful applicants will be required to attend an incubator meeting with members of the MDC team and IIB, which may be in person or via video conferencing. Alongside lead researchers, we also encourage ECRs/postdocs/PhD students who are leading translational projects in their labs to apply jointly with their PI. Projects will run for between 3 to 6 months in duration.

Please note that discussions with the MDC are protected by a blanket confidentiality agreement (applicable to members of the CLES, CEMPS and CMH Colleges), allowing a full discussion of findings.

**Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis till such time as the two awards have been made. Please return the completed application form to Yujin Du at the Translational Research Exchange@Exeter centre (**[**tree@exeter.ac.uk**](tree%40exeter.ac.uk)**).**

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| 1. **APPLICANT DETAILS**
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| **Name of Principal Investigator**  |  |
| **Discipline and College/Division of Principal Investigator** |  |
| **Email address** |  |
| **Telephone number** |  |
| **Name(s) of Co-Investigator(s)**  |  |
| **Discipline and College/Division of Co-Investigator(s)** |  |
| 1. **PROJECT DETAILS**
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| **Project title** |  |
| **Is this application being submitted for developing a Translational Roadmap, or for an experimental/informatics project with the MDC? If you are requesting funds for an experimental/informatics project at MDC, please submit a separate page (up to 2 sides of A4) detailing and justifying the funds requested, up to a maximum of £10,000. Within the same page, include a brief project plan and milestones showcasing how the proposed work will facilitate the clinical/commercial translation of the underlying research.** |  |
| **What is the unmet clinical need that your research/product addresses? Include relevant evidence (published literature, discussion with patient groups, clinician perspectives, etc.) describing and showcasing your understanding of the unmet need.** [300 words max] |  |
| **Describe your main findings so far and your potential target/therapeutic**[300 words max] |  |
| **In your words, describe the readiness of the project for commercialisation***Include details of any discussions with IIB that have already taken place, and whether or not a company has been incorporated.*[200 words max] |  |
| 1. **ROUTE TO TRANSLATION**
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| **Has any of the research IP been protected, and if not what are the plans for the protection of IP? Please comment on any relevant background IP.**[100 words max] |  |
| **Please report funding sources that have helped develop the project so far.**[100 words max] |  |
| **What funding would you consider applying for after this scheme to take the translational project forward? Please specify timelines and award amounts.** *NOTE: We appreciate that these grant/funding applications could change after the work performed for this current award, and particularly after the development of a roadmap. However, we want to see a firm commitment on the part of the PI and Co-Is to build a long-term programme of work envisaging the real-world use of their research/product. The aim of this award and partnership is to facilitate this translation and de-risk the future work and funding applications.*[200 words max] |  |